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General Assembly
Sixty-second session

Official Records

7th plenary meeting
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New York

President: Mr. Kerim ..... (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Address by His Majesty King Mswati III, Head of State of the Kingdom of Swaziland

The President: The Assembly will hear an address by the Head of State of the Kingdom of Swaziland.

His Majesty King Mswati III, Head of State of the Kingdom of Swaziland, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Majesty King Mswati III, Head of State of the Kingdom of Swaziland, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

King Mswati: It is a great pleasure for me to address the General Assembly at its sixty-second session.

Let me begin by extending warm greetings from the Kingdom of Swaziland to the entire United Nations family.

It befits this moment that I extend our congratulations to the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, upon his appointment. We trust that he will continue in the footsteps of his predecessors in carrying out the important mission of the United Nations. The Kingdom of Swaziland pledges its support to him as he continues to promote and protect the noble goals of multilateralism.

The role of the United Nations is to promote peace and security, sustainable development, human rights and fundamental freedoms. The United Nations should continue to shape situations for the betterment of the lives of all the peoples of the world. If it is to succeed, there is a need for the United Nations to reform its main bodies. We have met regionally as countries; consensus decisions have been reached and recommendations made, and we look forward to their implementation. As the United Nations achieves reform, it is likely to undertake meaningful action so that when decisions are taken, the Organization will be respected by all.

Many of our countries the world over are facing countless challenges, and we look to this Organization to come up with lasting solutions. My country, Swaziland, is still undertaking development programmes to implement the Millennium Development Goals that were set by the United Nations for individual countries to achieve. We have programmes for building a very sound economy so that our people will have good jobs that will make their living standards better.

As part of our human capital development and capacity-building programme, we are educating and training our people in every aspect to acquire more knowledge and information, and we look to the well-developed countries to share their experiences and ideas.

One area of great concern is that, as we continue to implement our development programmes, we are

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faced with the challenges of globalization that will affect our preferential markets. That will be detrimental to us, the developing countries, since companies have big loans to repay that were taken out on the basis of better markets. We hope that, as the World Trade Organization (WTO) rules come into force, there shall be considerations to ensure that all developing countries meet WTO standards. In that way, we shall be able to implement the rules equitably and effectively.

HIV/AIDS and other health problems remain some of the major challenges that we face as developing nations. We have programmes in place that we are trying to follow in dealing with the situation, but we are unable to meet our targets because of our limited resources. We have heard of many foundations that have been announced worldwide and we hope to be able to access them. We look forward to those responsible for such foundations sharing the information on how to reach the funds, as well as technical support.

We acknowledge the contribution made by the Global Fund in the fight against the scourge. My country is one of the beneficiaries of such funding, and we have been able to offer a lot of comfort to many of our people. We encourage the United Nations to continue to appeal on our behalf for continued support in eradicating the problem of HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, to name just a few.

We also recognize the role of various United Nations agencies working with our communities in the provision of shelter, nutritional support and education to mitigate the effects of the pandemic. I am pleased to state that our fight is showing some signs of success, as recent statistics have shown a decline in the prevalence rate.

We are faced with persistent droughts that have set us back as we continue to develop our country, and that has been worsened by the wildfires that have recently occurred, destroying properties, crops, livestock and our forest industry. My country is doing everything it can to help those that have been affected by this unfortunate situation. We would like to thank the countries and organizations that have come forward to help us during this period of hardship and we do make an appeal to others for support; which is still needed.

Some of the problems I have mentioned that are affecting my country are the result of climate changes. That is why we believe that the summit we had is very important, and we would like to commend the Secretary-General for convening the high-level summit on climate change held earlier this week. A political momentum has been generated, and it is our hope that the necessary negotiations on the matter will commence in Bali later this year during the meeting of the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The Kingdom of Swaziland has developed some sector policies that are climate-change friendly, such as our pro-green energy policy and water resources policy, to mention a couple. However, there is a need to enhance education, training and public awareness with regard to the adaptation and promotion of individual and institutional capacity-building in order to manage appropriate technology development and transfer.

We note that there is a general need for favourable access to and transfer of environmentally sound technologies, in particular from developed countries to developing countries, through supportive measures that promote technology cooperation. This will enable the necessary technological know-how to be transferred and economic, technical and managerial capabilities to be built for the efficient use and further development of transferred skills.

We would like to encourage the private sector, and in particular the multinational corporations, to be responsible enough to practise the same environmental and waste management principles in the developing world. We would also like to discourage the irresponsible dumping of harmful waste materials in developing countries.

The Kingdom of Swaziland is deeply committed to the United Nations Charter. Moreover, recent events in the world have been living proof that the United Nations is needed now more than ever before. Sadly, the realities of wars and violence still continue in different parts of the world. Conflicts, tensions and terrorism continue to destroy the social and economic fabric of the era that we are living in.

We welcome the report of the Secretary-General on the relationship between disarmament and development (A/62/112), in particular its recognition that armed violence and conflict impede the realization of the Millennium Development Goals.

In this regard we applaud the United Nations Development Programme for its efforts to prevent armed violence through its contribution to the disarmament and development agenda by promoting and participating in a number of policy-oriented initiatives.

We further commend the efforts of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa both for its continuation of the operation of the small arms and light weapons register for Africa for participating States, with a view to promoting transparency in the flows of small arms and light weapons, and for its programme entitled "African Security Sector Reform Programme", which carries the objective of transforming governance within the African security sector.

However, we are concerned about the situation in Somalia and Darfur and its far-reaching consequences for regional security. The continued human suffering in this region is unacceptable, and we hope that current efforts aimed at improving the situation will not be deprived of the opportunity to succeed. On a more positive note, we welcome the Security Council decision to deploy the joint African Union-United Nations hybrid peacekeeping force.

The Middle East continues to face challenges and the accumulation of crises and tensions in the region. It is therefore imperative that all parties concerned make an effort to achieve comprehensive, fair, just and durable settlements.

I would like to take this time to applaud the United Nations for its role in promoting its Charter, especially the principle of universality. There is one country, however, that is not benefiting from this principle, as it has been excluded from the family of nations.

I am talking about Taiwan: the Kingdom of Swaziland wishes to reiterate its appeal to the United Nations with respect to the question of Taiwan. We note that Taiwan exercised a well-founded right in international law to apply for membership in the United Nations. Regrettably, the application was rejected without due process.

The Government and people of Taiwan have shown their willingness and capacity to contribute actively to global development and peace, through disaster relief and health and development support to many regions. We continue to support the cause of the over 23 million people of Taiwan who are not represented in the one organization that should be truly global. I would like to challenge all nations to take my appeal seriously.

While our world experiences ever-accelerating political, economic and social changes, it is vital that we cooperate with each other in order to tackle and manage these issues. Cordial, balanced and respectful relations between nations based on the principles of the United Nations Charter will enable us all to meet and overcome future challenges of our time, and make this world a safer place for future generations.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Head of State of the Kingdom of Swaziland for the statement he has just made.

His Majesty King Mswati III, Head of State of the Kingdom of Swaziland, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Željko Komšić, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. Željko Komšić, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Željko Komšić, Chairman of the Presidency of the Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Komšić (*spoke in Bosnian; English text provided by the delegation*): It is my honour to participate in this meeting of the General Assembly's sixty-second session as Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I would also like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency, and to express my respect and gratitude to Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa for successfully presiding over the sixty-first session.

The United Nations and all other organizations depend on the collective strength of their members.

That strength should be drawn from the consensus of the Member States. On that note, I would like to express my regret for the loss of momentum in Security Council reform. For the past several years, our countries' representatives have met at the global level and have been prepared to realize the goals of the Millennium Declaration, in which the United Nations plays a distinguished role.

It is well-known that, in the recent past, my country paid a high price for the imperfect and inefficient United Nations system. The United Nations admitted its mistake and emphasized in its first report on Srebrenica that the United Nations experience in Bosnia and Herzegovina was one of the most difficult and painful in the Organization's history. The report further noted that Srebrenica clarified the truth the United Nations and the world learned too late: Bosnia and Herzegovina was as much a moral obligation as it was a military conflict, and Srebrenica will haunt us forever.

On 27 February 2007, the International Court of Justice ruled on the application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina versus Serbia and Montenegro. The International Court of Justice ruled that genocide was committed against Bosnian Muslims in and around Srebrenica in eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina. Members will agree, of course, that this was not an isolated case. That is one more reason for our determination and commitment, shared by a majority of the Member States, to the necessary reform of the world Organization.

In that light, Bosnia and Herzegovina is of the opinion that only a strong United Nations can be an efficient instrument in regulating international relations, in accordance with the United Nations Charter and international law. Apart from the necessary reforms, it is also essential to revitalize the United Nations, including the General Assembly and its committees, the Economic and Social Council, the Secretariat and other bodies.

That would include defining a number of issues, such as Security Council membership categories, the number of members, selection procedures for new members, veto powers, regional representation, working methods, and so on. Those attest to the complexity of the ongoing reform. A productive step forward will inevitably lead to essential negotiations in that context, rather than to the usual ongoing consultations. I should like to emphasize Bosnia and Herzegovina's interest in reform that would create a larger Security Council membership, and thus an additional seat for the Eastern European Group.

Multi-ethnic and multireligious Bosnia and Herzegovina, with its rich historical heritage and experience of the failures of the international community, primarily the United Nations — failures that had troubling consequences for my country, but also positive results in post-war peacebuilding alongside United Nations representatives, bodies and agencies — could contribute greatly to the United Nations becoming an effective instrument in the collective management of international relations.

My country believes that there can be no peace or stability without economic and social development. My country maintains its support for the Security Council as a critical body for international cooperation, peace and the development of the rights of all nations. Having met its historic challenges, Bosnia and Herzegovina is now able to share its experiences with a troubled world. Bosnia and Herzegovina is thus determined to intensify ongoing activities leading to its non-permanent membership of the Security Council from 2010 to 2012, and looks forward to the support of the majority of Member States for that membership.

I come from a post-conflict country that has moved towards becoming a modern democratic society and taken the path to European and trans-Atlantic integration. That is why my country is truly committed to the strengthening of international cooperation on the regional, European and global levels.

It is with great pride that I can state today that Bosnia and Herzegovina is an active participant in all regional south-eastern European initiatives and processes. In 2007, Bosnia and Herzegovina was recognized for its proactive regional stand. The South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP) summit in Zagreb adopted the decision to make Sarajevo the regional cooperation council centre. Creating the regional cooperation council is the final step in the transformation of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, meaning that SEECP member States will assume regional responsibilities. With that decision, the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina will become a future regional cooperation centre, and Bosnia and Herzegovina will also be home to the regional disaster

preparedness and prevention initiative secretariat, taking strong regional ownership of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe initiative. The representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina will play a lead role in the regional arms control verification and implementation assistance centre in Zagreb.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is pursuing active regional cooperation in fighting organized crime. We cooperate actively with the Southeast Europe Cooperative Initiative Centre for Combating Transborder Crime in Bucharest. It was through more efficient regional cooperation, electronic identity databases and efficient border control that Bosnia and Herzegovina was able to reduce the number of illegal immigrants, as well as all forms of cross-border criminal activity.

We are developing cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna on the detection and prevention of radioactive substance transportation and proliferation on Bosnia and Herzegovina territory. Bosnia and Herzegovina is building relationships with neighbouring countries on the basis of equality, complete independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. Bosnia and Herzegovina and its neighbours are aware that complete development can be achieved only by joining a united Europe. That goal will be achieved by pursuing the development of all aspects of good relations with neighbouring countries, the democratization of the entire region, and acceptance of general European standards.

Bosnia and Herzegovina believes in non-interference in the internal affairs of sovereign countries, and thus that the solution for Kosovo is to be reached through dialogue among the interested parties. Bosnia and Herzegovina supports dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina and is eager to help find a solution acceptable to both sides within regional initiatives. Bosnia and Herzegovina supports the efforts of the Troika Contact Group for Kosovo and hopes that a satisfying solution for the future status of Kosovo will be found. A further lengthy delay in the resolution of the status of Kosovo will certainly have a long-term negative impact on the entire Balkan region.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has also achieved significant successes in the broader international context. In late 2006, Bosnia and Herzegovina became a member of the NATO Partnership for Peace. Further recognition came in May 2007, when Bosnia and Herzegovina became a member of a rather significant new United Nations body — the Human Rights Council.

On 31 May 2007, Bosnia and Herzegovina became a presiding member of the Hague Code of Conduct, which has been signed by 126 United Nations Member States. My country and the other signatories of the Code, who believe in the principle of collective safety, are prepared to fight against the proliferation of ballistic missile technology. We are aware of the great danger posed by ballistic missiles in the hands of non-government entities, which could abuse them for destructive purposes anywhere in the world. Therefore, I urge all countries that have not yet signed the Hague Code of Conduct — particularly those with ballistic capacity — to accept the Code. I also wish to urge all Member States to support the relevant draft resolution proposed by my country and Portugal.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has participated and will continue to participate, to the extent possible, in the international efforts of the anti-terrorism coalition. We have also undertaken to join the anti-terrorism efforts of the European Union. The Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina has approved an anti-terrorism strategic plan for the period 2006-2009. The ongoing reform of our criminal code will result in additional anti-terrorism measures that will conform to the relevant international conventions.

Bosnia and Herzegovina supports other Member States in continuing joint efforts to strengthen respect for all human rights, including civil, economic, cultural, political, social, developmental and other rights. Bosnia and Herzegovina has agreed to serve as a sponsor of the Italian initiative aimed at a United Nations moratorium on the death penalty, to be considered by the General Assembly. Bosnia and Herzegovina has made significant progress in submitting the relevant reports to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva.

I also wish to note that Bosnia and Herzegovina, together with Jordan, has promoted the United Nations Better World Campaign for the past few years. The Campaign seeks to improve the timeliness and effectiveness of humanitarian disaster response.

Bosnian authorities continue to be committed to cooperating fully with the International Criminal

Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). All suspected war criminals from the territories of the former Yugoslavia must be brought to justice. To date, we have engaged in positive cooperation with the Tribunal on issues such as the processing of criminal charges, extradition, contacting the relevant authorities, access to documentation and providing appropriate working conditions for Court representatives and others in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We are creating a legal framework and have established the War Crimes Chamber within the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina to begin processing war crimes cases. That is one of the conditions for establishing an atmosphere of mutual trust and reconciliation in post-conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, the ICTY should not conclude its work until the most notorious war criminals — in particular Bosnian Serb war leaders Radovan Karadzic, Ratko Mladic and others — are brought to justice.

Bosnia and Herzegovina supports all peace initiatives and conflict prevention activities. We support and are following very closely the Middle East Road Map, which will lead to permanent and sustainable peace in Middle East. As part of United Nations peacekeeping operations, Bosnia and Herzegovina has military observers in the Congo and Ethiopia and has contributed to the civilian police forces in the Sudan, Cyprus, Liberia and Haiti. Bosnia and Herzegovina has also sent a small demining unit to Iraq in order to help its people establish a democratic and self-sustainable country.

We are certain that, by strengthening multilateralism, the United Nations can develop effective measures to prevent armed conflict. At the same time, however, it is essential to uphold the principle of the political independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries, in accordance with the guiding principles of international law and with full respect for human rights.

Bosnia and Herzegovina supports the Middle East Road Map and the initiatives of the Quartet, which establish a basis for the beginning of a true Israeli-Palestinian dialogue that is brokered by the United States and in accordance with European Union guidelines. Bosnia and Herzegovina calls for a general, unconditional and mutual cessation of all hostilities, the release of all hostages and the launching of negotiations on a definitive two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian problem.

Bosnia and Herzegovina urges all ethnic and religious communities in Iraq to put an end to sectarian violence and to take an active role in political life. We join the rest of the international community in calling for a broad national political dialogue, emphasizing full compliance with the Geneva Conventions of 1949.

Mindful of the potentially catastrophic consequences of a deepening of the crisis related to the Iranian nuclear development programme, Bosnia and Herzegovina calls on Iran to be prepared to cooperate fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency and to engage in a dialogue with key partners.

The United Nations role in conflict resolution is crucial. However, during various international crises, particularly that in the former Yugoslavia, the Organization has failed to play the role entrusted to it by the Charter. The Iraqi crisis highlights the weaknesses of the United Nations in preventing conflict throughout the world. If the United Nations fails to shoulder its Charter responsibilities, that could lead to a number of unilateral interventions, which would have a very negative impact on international stability.

The foreign policy of Bosnia and Herzegovina is focused on long-term peacekeeping and development with a view to ensuring the safety and stability of overall development. All our international activities are based on and conform to the Charter of the United Nations, the Helsinki Final Act of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and universally accepted principles of international law.

Aware of the enormous threat to peace posed by nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, particularly in the hands of terrorists, Bosnia and Herzegovina has taken significant steps towards total control in preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We have ratified or acceded to most of the major documents in this area. Bosnia and Herzegovina is also eager to cooperate fully with other countries at the bilateral level through relevant multilateral organizations and initiatives in order to effectively fight the proliferation and use of weapons of mass destruction.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has adopted a law providing for the implementation of the Chemical

Weapons Convention. As one of the countries most affected by the mine stockpiles left over from the previous conflict, Bosnia and Herzegovina is paying close attention to the implementation of the Ottawa Convention.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is an active participant in the response and prevention programmes of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. Our contributions to the fight against that disease are described in the Bosnia and Herzegovina Strategy to Prevent and Combat HIV/AIDS, 2004-2009.

Bosnia and Herzegovina pays its dues on time and on a regular basis to the United Nations and all other organizations of which it is a member. We urge other countries, especially major contributors, to do likewise. I am referring in particular to the dues to the ICTY and peacekeeping operations that have not been paid in a timely manner.

Two days ago in this Hall, we had a highly constructive exchange of views on one of the most serous and potentially dangerous phenomena of our time: global warming. Once again, I should like to emphasize the crucial importance of effective and timely United Nations action on this issue. In 2000, my country ratified the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which entered into force in Bosnia and Herzegovina on 15 June 2007. I urge all Member States that have not yet done so to ratify the Convention without delay.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Željko Komšić, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Armando Emílio Guebuza, President of the Republic of Mozambique

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Mozambique.

Mr. Armando Emilio Guebuza, President of the Republic of Mozambique, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Armando Emílio Guebuza, President of the Republic of Mozambique, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Guebuza (*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation*): On behalf of the people and the Government of the Republic of Mozambique and, indeed, on my own behalf, I would like to associate myself with the previous speakers in congratulating you most warmly on your election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-second session. We are confident that with your experience and wise leadership, as demonstrated throughout your remarkable academic and diplomatic career at the service of your country, and with the support of us all, the deliberations of this session will be crowned with success.

Mr. President, my delegation would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to your predecessor, Her Excellency Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, for her dedication and the innovative manner with which she presided over the deliberations of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly.

We also wish to reiterate our special tribute to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his election to this post, and we salute him for his commitment to the continued search for solutions to the many challenges faced by humanity, and for his hard work on behalf of our Organization. Mr. Secretary-General, we would like to reaffirm our full readiness to continue cooperating with you for the successful discharge of your difficult but noble mission.

We commend the selection of the theme of climate change as the main discussion topic for this session, as it is an urgent and important issue for our countries and for the future of our planet. Thanks to the revolution in convergence technology in the areas of informatics, broadcasting and telecommunications, with implications for time and space compression, we have been following with emotion and on a regular basis, and in some instances in real time, the effects of climate change on our planet. We have witnessed the reduction in the availability of water resources and the tragic consequences for human beings, fauna and flora; the increase in the frequency and magnitude of extreme meteorological phenomena, such as extreme

temperatures, earthquakes and tsunamis, resulting in the occurrence of natural disasters whose consequences are incalculable; the reduction of glaciers and the rise of sea level; to mention but a few of the potential impacts of climate change, the full effects of which are yet to be clearly determined.

The impact of these phenomena is felt more harshly in developing countries, such as ours, given our deficient forecasting capacity in terms of human and technical resources. When these disasters strike our countries, our limitations and our lack of capacity to face them become more obvious. Examples of such limitations include: a lack of infrastructure, such as roads and bridges, preventing rescue personnel from providing timely assistance, even to citizens at great risk; a lack of means to assist the victims; and a lack of resources to mitigate the suffering of the survivors.

Given that we live in a global village, the effects of climate change are also felt in developed countries. Phenomena never before recorded with the magnitude and frequency with which they manifest themselves today are beginning to be a cause of concern for the citizens of these countries.

To digress a little from the discussion at hand, we would like to express our solidarity with and compassion to all victims of the natural disasters that have affected different regions of the planet in recent years. In honour of the victims of these disasters, let us all reaffirm our commitment to continue together to strive for a better world, a world free of these threats to human life and possessions, and to fauna and flora.

That is a collective commitment and aspiration that we have already assumed through several instruments, such as the Rio Declaration, Agenda 21 and the Kyoto Protocol. More than ever, and in the face of recurrent and increasingly devastating tragedies, there is a need for the involvement of all the members of the international community in the implementation of the global actions provided for in these joint undertakings.

By the same token, we should ensure that the three pillars of sustainable development, namely, economic development, social development and the protection of the environment should be approached and tackled by all of us, in an integrated, coordinated and balanced manner. Let us all keep in mind the strong relationship between these commitments and our collective desire to attain the Millennium Development Goals.

We note with great satisfaction that the international community continues to be committed to addressing, in a structured and sustainable manner, the challenges imposed by climate change. In this context, we welcome the decisions on climate change taken by the Heads of State and Government of Group of Eight (G-8) at their last summit held in June of this year in Germany.

We would also like to congratulate the Secretary-General, for his initiative in appointing three eminent persons as Special Envoys on Climate Change. The convening of the High-level Event on Climate Change, just two days ago here in this General Assembly Hall, opens up new prospects for the renewed momentum necessary for substantial progress to be made during the Conference of States Parties to the United Nations Framework Agreement on Climate Change, scheduled for December of this year in Bali, Indonesia.

We are hopeful that this Conference will build consensus on future actions, including concrete targets aimed at reducing carbon dioxide emissions, and a post-Kyoto agreement to be binding on all nations. May this Conference not frustrate expectations, particularly those of the developing countries.

It is our hope that in Bali consensus will be reached in some key areas. First, we would like to see the provision of funding of the national action plans for adaptation to climate change, proposed by developing countries parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change. The second element is the Adaptation Fund, established in conformity with the Kyoto Protocol, to provide assistance for developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, in the funding of their adaptation activities. The third is the implementation of the Buenos Aires Programme of Work on Adaptation and Response Measures.

Mozambique is a country prone to various types of natural disasters, which cyclically have resulted in the loss of human lives, the destruction of huge agricultural areas, property and social and economic infrastructures and increased soil erosion and a decrease in or outright loss of biodiversity.

This state of affairs is aggravated by the shortage of physical infrastructures for water management, such as dams and dykes, and for food conservation, such as

silos. In addition, over 70 per cent of our population lives in rural areas, and natural resources are their principal source of livelihood. Hence the need for sustainable use that does not jeopardize the country's environmental balance.

Because of this permanent vulnerability, environmental issues in general, and climate change in particular, form an integral part of the Government agenda. Particular attention is thus given to reducing the vulnerability of citizens to famine caused by drought, reducing human and property losses, mitigating the suffering of the population as a result of disasters and ensuring quick and harmonious reconstruction processes.

The activities under way include mapping the areas at risk, improving the early warning system, improving the conditions for the population to store agricultural produce, the provision of training and civic education for our citizens on natural disasters and their impact on the life of the country and the establishment of a national emergency operations centre, which operates 24 hours a day non-stop.

The introduction and implementation of these measures give priority to and rely on the active participation of our citizens. For us, the involvement of our citizens, who are the primary and ultimate beneficiaries of these governmental actions, is a key factor in ensuring the success of activities aimed at the preservation of the environment and mitigating the adverse effects of climate change. The positive impact of these actions was in evidence and widely acknowledged during the recent floods, cyclones and high tides that we experienced earlier this year. These measures were recently put to the test once again, when a warning was sounded on the possibility of a tsunami.

In recognition of the fact that the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change and the prevention and reduction of natural disasters require the engagement of the international community, the importance of strengthening regional, continental and international coordination cannot be overemphasized. In the framework of the report of the High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence in the areas of development, humanitarian assistance and the environment (A/61/583), we advocate the strengthening of the Global Environment Facility within the United Nations system. We thus encourage the United Nations to enhance its institutional capacity and resources to better assist Member States to incorporate adequate environmental policies in their national development strategies. In this regard, special attention should be given to developing countries with limited resources to fund their national capacity-building for dealing with issues related to climate change.

From this rostrum we once again call upon all United Nations Member States to accede to and fully implement all the instruments that have been adopted to revert and mitigate the impact of climate change. These instruments include the Kyoto Protocol, Agenda 21 and the Rio Declaration, whose contents were reaffirmed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg in 2002.

As members of the United Nations family, we have the historic responsibility of securing a bright future for our children and for the generations to come by preserving a quality environment. That is why today, more than ever, the time has come for us to join our hands and work to preserve our planet. To act against climate change is, in the last analysis, to preserve world peace and security and to ensure necessary conditions to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, which should be viewed and assumed as the minimum that can now be demanded. Indeed, let us not postpone until tomorrow what we can, and must, all do today, as tomorrow may be too late.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Mozambique for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Armando Emílio Guebuza, President of the Republic of Mozambique, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Mr. Kariyawasam (Sri Lanka), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Address by Mr. Tassos Papadopoulos, President of the Republic of Cyprus

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Cyprus.

Mr. Tassos Papadopoulos, President of the Republic of Cyprus, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Tassos Papadopoulos, President of the Republic of Cyprus, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Papadopoulos: Before I begin, I wish to indicate that my statement is complementary to that delivered yesterday (see A/62/PV.4) by the Prime Minister of Portugal on behalf of the European Union, to which Cyprus fully subscribes.

As this is the first general debate since the election of the new Secretary-General, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Ban Ki-moon on his appointment to that crucial post and wish him every success. His report on the work of the Organization (A/62/1) demonstrates not only the broad spectrum of issues dealt with by the United Nations but also the comprehensive character and vast potential of multilateral diplomacy. Among the aspects of the Organization's work that are of particular interest, we note the disconcerting developments in the Middle East, the modest progress made with respect to the development agenda, the effects of the Organization's involvement in different crises, particularly in Africa, and the increasing impact of its humanitarian contribution.

To date, we have ample scientific data and other overwhelmingly convincing evidence suggesting that world climate is changing to the detriment of human and ecological systems as a result of human activity. Thus, our response to this alarming phenomenon should be the focus of our debate rather than the extent to which it exists.

We believe that it is important for us to define, from the outset, the scope of the response we are seeking to formulate. In the face of the quasi-irreversibility of the damage done thus far, we should at least put the necessary focus, resources and energy into curbing the galloping deterioration of the situation and urgently decide the first steps to protect our societies from large-scale future climate change.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has suggested a number of technological and policy instruments that are available to Governments for mitigation action. We stand ready to support the adoption of a number of sectoral policies and measures that the Panel has deemed effective, such as the use of renewable energy, the use of technology to produce energy cleanly, improved waste and waste-water management and the use of alternative technologies in exploiting human systems like forestry, fisheries and agriculture.

In deciding and enforcing our response, we see no plausible framework other than the United Nations. Aside from its unique position to address the issue because of its global character, its success in confronting a threat with such massive potential as climate change will be a litmus test for the relevance of our Organization. One could say that climate change is the modern-day equivalent of the security threat that necessitated the establishment of the Organization in 1945. It remains to be seen whether our system can be as effective in dealing with contemporary threats to humanity as it has been in dealing with more traditional security deficits.

Let me now turn to an issue with which the United Nations has had a long involvement, an issue which we aim to keep as one of the Organization's priorities until it has been definitively resolved within the framework set out in the numerous relevant resolutions of this Organization.

For many years, the United Nations has engaged in strenuous efforts aimed at brokering a solution. It may be that the task has proved so very arduous, because the Cyprus issue, when stripped of the niceties of diplomatic terminology, is a question of foreign aggression and continuing occupation of a significant part of a sovereign State, entailing enclaved and missing persons, refugees and massive and enduring violations of human rights.

Cyprus has survived the most difficult circumstances created by the many facets of the problem and has primarily insisted on one thing vis-à-vis the involvement of the United Nations in its resolution: the full application of the values on which this Organization was founded and which it has worked so hard to promote.

So, why does this problem persist after so many years during which the national, regional and international political landscape has undergone dramatic changes? Certainly, it is neither for lack of political will nor for lack of effort on our part. Rather, the occupying Power has not displayed any motivation to solve the problem, and this has only been reinforced by the Annan plan, which satisfied all Turkish desiderata, thus being readily accepted by the Turkish

side. Instead, Turkey has used its dominant position to command trade-offs of all sorts.

Secondly, Turkey's long-standing objective of gaining political and military control over Cyprus remains unchanged. Despite declaratory remarks of willingness to solve the Cyprus problem, its actions confirm its dedication to its ab initio pursuit of controlling Cyprus by partitioning it geographically into two ethnically clean parts, with Turkey securing rights of suzerainty and the "right" of intervention in Cyprus.

Thirdly, efforts to solve the Cyprus problem have not been filtered through a system of values and norms of international law. They have not been tailored to tackling the roots of the problem or even to the problem itself; rather, their centre of gravity seems to have been the kind of solution the occupying Power would want or could, at least, tolerate. In fact, it is clear through the conduct and negotiating positions of Turkey that it has not contemplated a solution outside the boundaries of the status quo.

Fourthly, shifting the problem from the context of its origin — that of invasion and occupation — has led to a problem-solving methodology that divides the distance that separates the parties, caving in to the demands of the more powerful party and making success conditional upon the other's magnanimity.

Fifthly, the occupying Power has insisted on discussing elements that form neither part of the genesis of the problem nor part of its solution. The Cyprus problem is caused by not bad community relations but by outside intervention. Persisting, therefore, with a constitutional arrangement, set up primarily on the basis of ethnic origin — without due respect for the overriding democratic principles of liberty and equality of all citizens — insults the dignity of those citizens and dooms the viability of any settlement.

We currently find ourselves engaged in an effort to implement a process consisting of an Agreement concluded and signed by the two communities in Cyprus on 8 July 2006 and complemented by letters exchanged between the leaders of the two communities and the then Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs of the United Nations, Mr. Gambari, on 15 November 2006. The surprising laboriousness in the implementation of this carefully crafted Agreement — the purpose of which is to prepare the ground for subsequent negotiation and to lead to a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus issue — is not inherent to this particular process. We should therefore concentrate on implementing what has been agreed. The pace can only be determined by progress, with full-fledged negotiations as needed. Sidelining or circumventing stages of the process will lead, not to expediting the solution, but to confirming the deadlock.

So, what does the future hold for the mission of good offices entrusted to the Secretary-General by the Security Council? For our part, we remain fully committed, as it is clear to us that we cannot sustain the status quo and must insist on a meaningful and forward-looking process that can elicit concrete results, leading to the establishment of a bizonal, bicommunal federation, within the true meaning of each of these terms. The only process that can take us forward is the one established by the 8 July agreed process I have just outlined. This process is expected to test suggestions, ideas and alternatives at the expert level, adequately prepare the ground and submit to the leaders, any points that warrant political compromise or agreement. Although the last meeting with the Turkish Cypriot leader did not signal the beginning of the implementation of the Agreement as we had hoped, we will not rescind our efforts to put the 8 July process back on track. The element of time is very important; however, only progress through preparing the ground can bring us sooner to an agreed settlement. With a view to achieving progress, I submitted to the Secretary-General certain ideas and proposals that I hope will contribute to this end.

Turkey's intentions are not only manifest in the non-resolution of the Cyprus problem after all these years. They transpire from all its actions: the non-normalization of its relations with Cyprus as a first step to becoming a European partner, the non-removal of any of its troops from Cypriot soil as a confidence-building measure, the intensification of efforts to project a secessionist entity in Cyprus and its systematic violations of our sovereign air and maritime space and of the military status quo. This was recently confirmed by explicit statements of its leadership at the highest political level referring to "a settlement based on two peoples, two democracies, two States and two religions". That is an arrangement we shall never accept.

Over the past year, we have also witnessed repeated attempts by the occupying Power to illegally

explore my country's natural resources and to sabotage our sovereign right to explore and manage these resources. It has carried out unauthorized demolitions of Greek Cypriot houses in the areas it occupies and it continues to destroy cultural and religious heritage. It has intensified the large-scale illegal exploitation of Greek Cypriot properties in the occupied part of Cyprus, not least because this will skew the terms of a future settlement.

At the same time, Turkey pursues its own strategic objectives in Cyprus at the expense of reunification and is only guided by its own interests and not those of Turkish Cypriots. It has ascertained over the years that the occupied part of Cyprus would come completely under its political, economic and military control. We regret to note that Turkey has been trying to involve our friends and neighbours in this ill-conceived effort. Underpinning this strategy is the intent to legitimize the fait accompli of the invasion and attribute political status to its results. Such a strategy could not have been achieved without presenting the Turkish Cypriot community as victims, not of Turkish aggression as really is the case, but of Greek Cypriots for resisting this fait accompli. A prime example of those tactics has been the ongoing campaign to deceivingly suggest that the Turkish Cypriot community is economically disadvantaged because it is isolated. Considering that the per capita income of Turkish Cypriots has doubled over the past three years and that they now enjoy the 59th highest per capita income in the world, one can easily detect the political agenda behind the attempt to link their economic development with the fate of the illegal regime.

For years now, we have been advocating that the road to solving the Cyprus problem is not via the exclusion of the inconvenient truths that underlie it or the bypassing of principles that are, for us, the guarantee that the settlement of the Cyprus problem will continue to be valid and relevant in a constantly changing world.

Equally important, we regard the preservation of our interests and those of Turkey in our region not as mutually exclusive but as complementary and interdependent. Our vision must be to bequeath to future generations the legacy of friendship, cooperation and good neighbourliness. We are afforded the opportunity to avoid eternalizing this feud and we should seize it.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Cyprus for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Tassos Papadopoulos, President of the Republic of Cyprus, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Marc Ravalomanana, President of the Republic of Madagascar

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Madagascar.

Mr. Marc Ravalomanana, President of the Republic of Madagascar, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Marc Ravalomanana, President of the Republic of Madagascar, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Ravalomanana: Each and every one of us knows that there is an urgent need for the globalization of responsibility. Each of us knows that this responsibility demands more than just goodwill. Each of us knows that the globalization of responsibility demands the creation of the right environment to reach these objectives. Every year, these objectives and measures are repeated at this General Assembly. Every year, the actions to fulfil them remain weak.

This is the fifth time I have taken part in the General Assembly, and I must honestly tell you that I am very concerned about two things. First, I am very concerned because national interests prevail over emergencies that affect us all. These emergencies are closely linked to common interests. It is in the interest of all of us to address them together. Second, I am very concerned about the lack of seriousness. A lot of promises are made, but not a lot of promises are kept.

Today, we are confronted with two major challenges that could entail major disasters should we not take them seriously and act quickly. Those challenges must be the priority of priorities. The first concerns climate change. The second is the development of Africa.

Imagine the impact on all the nations and all the people represented here if the situation worsens. All of our national efforts will be ruined by earthquakes, ecological disasters and social disasters. Climate change creates and aggravates conflicts. The refugees and victims of climate change will be the refugees and victims of wars and poverty. We must act today to save the earth, or this earth will not be ours anymore.

On the other hand, imagine the impact on all nations and all people if the current situation improves. It will strengthen the confidence of nations and investors. If the world were in ecological balance, and if it were without poverty, there would be a considerable impact on political and social conflicts.

The two challenges are bound together. Africa will have either a positive or a negative impact on the world climate, with enormous repercussions. Our actions and our decisions will decide. The world climate will have either a positive or a negative impact, with enormous repercussions for the development of Africa. Again, our decisions and our actions will decide.

Africa only produces one per cent of the world's solar energy. In Africa, the possibilities for new and clean forms of energy and for the reduction of carbon dioxide are enormous.

Madagascar could provide some of its energy needs through the development of hydropower. Additionally, half of the island could be reforested. Our island, called the Red Island, could once again become known as the Green Island.

There is a strong link between the quality of the environment and poverty. Many bushfires are the result of poverty; the destruction of natural resources increases poverty. It is necessary to quickly step out of this vicious cycle. Increased international help will limit the exploitation of natural resources by poor farmers.

In Madagascar, we have been planning our development strategies around the concept of sustainability for some time now. Our vision is called "Madagascar, Naturally!" It means that our natural resources and our people are our wealth. We will preserve our environment and increase its value by using it responsibly.

We are actively looking for international investment, but believe that in the long run this will not amount to much unless we have domestic investors as well. We can create added value through our successes in processing our natural products.

We are convinced that economic growth from the bottom up is the key to success. The most important message I gave to the Malagasy people at the beginning of my second term was the necessity of decentralization right down to the level of the *fokontany*. Originally, the *fokontany* was the traditional Malagasy village. We are trying our best to restore the balance between humans and nature.

This is a different approach; this is a Malagasy approach; this is an approach that encourages the Malagasy people to take their future into their own hands; this is not the approach of the donors. With this approach we strive to forge a partnership with the international community.

We have described all of this in detail in the Madagascar Action Plan. Read it, and you will see that we are already contributing to meeting the challenges that I have mentioned. We are committing ourselves to protecting and cherishing the environment, to healing the injuries of the past and to ending rampant climate change.

In the Action Plan we came up with a set of very ambitious goals. We do what we can, despite our limited resources; we could do so much more if the international community helped us more.

We are thankful to the donors who have increased their financial assistance; however, as a whole, these efforts have fallen far short of our expectations, especially if we are to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The amount of financial assistance is not even close to the promise of doubled aid to Africa. The donors are still far from honouring the numerous promises made here at the United Nations. They are far from addressing global challenges. The international approach to Africa lacks seriousness.

Aid to Africa is still not a success story for many members of the international community. On average, results are poor, but Africa is advancing as a continent — not everywhere, but in an increasing number of countries.

Once, Madagascar rated amongst the least effective countries. Today, we are an effective country. Our economy has benefited from continuous economic

growth: we had 5 per cent economic growth 5 years ago, 6 per cent over the last few years and 7 per cent in 2007. Poverty rates are dropping dramatically; in 2002, 80 per cent of our population lived in poverty and last year this rate stood at 67 per cent.

Aid to Africa is as weak as ever. Africa can absorb so much more and all countries would benefit from this. The European Union is a good example of a lot of aid leading to great benefits for many countries. I am convinced that Africa could advance much quicker if the international community and the African countries could come up with a new plan.

A "Marshall Plan" for Africa — I have suggested this repeatedly over the years and I am saying it again: We need a "Marshall Plan" for Africa. A crucial element to this plan should be a new partnership. I propose to you an ecological partnership between the industrialized countries and Africa. Such a partnership could contribute substantially to finding real solutions to some of the climate problems through a programme of investment. Other important features would include nature conservation and the preservation of our biodiversity.

I am convinced that Africa could supply clean energy, medicinal and industrial plants and other natural products in the future. The world will eventually need more and more of these.

We feel that sustainable policies that emphasize protection and added value should be high on our agenda, and should represent our commitment to the world. Remember though that such policies will also benefit our country.

In Madagascar, cyclones destroy a large part of our harvests every year; they destroy houses; they kill people. The increase in the number and strength of those cyclones is hindering the whole process of development. Higher temperatures are reducing harvests and our unique biodiversity. They also lead to more and more harmful inserts and illnesses.

All over Africa, we are already seeing the consequences of climate change. Droughts and floods are the causes of increased migration and serious conflicts. An aggravation of climate change will not only bring fluxes of devastating waters on all continents, but also fluxes of refugees and waves of social conflicts.

In short, the world needs Africa to solve the problem of climate change, and Africa needs a stable climate for lasting, sustainable development. To achieve this globalization of responsibility will require dedicated leadership. We need leaders who can mobilize their people and get results — fast results and big results.

At this time I want to congratulate the new Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. I wish him the best of success in this very important task. We in Africa look to the United Nations for dynamic leadership — it is our hope. May his leadership help us to get results — the kind of results that bring peace and prosperity to Africa and to the world.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Madagascar for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Marc Ravalomanana, President of the Republic of Madagascar, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Umaru Yar'Adua, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Mr. Umaru Yar'Adua, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Umaru Yar'Adua, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Yar'Adua: I stand before the Assembly for the first time as President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and I wish to reaffirm Nigeria's complete dedication and commitment to the ideals of the United Nations. We declare our total support for the Organization's efforts to meet the multiple humanitarian, social, peace and security and development challenges confronting our world today.

At the outset, may I, on behalf of the Government and the People of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, congratulate Mr. Kerim and his country, the Republic of Macedonia, on his election as President of the

General Assembly at its sixty-second session. I assure him of the full support and cooperation of the Nigerian delegation as he leads the deliberations of the session.

I also wish to extend my profound appreciation to his predecessor, Her Excellency Ms. Haya Rashed Al Khalifa, for the commitment and dedication with which she presided over the affairs of the sixty-first session.

I formally extend my sincere congratulations to Mr. Ban Ki-moon on his assumption of office as Secretary-General. I commend him for his resolute leadership and his determination to carry through the requisite reform of the United Nations system and assure him of the full support of the Nigerian Government.

I also pay tribute to the previous Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for the commitment, diligence and courage with which he piloted the affairs of the United Nations during the past 10 years. We are proud of the enormous contributions made to this Organization by that illustrious son of Africa.

Since coming into office, my Administration has anchored its pursuit of a re-energized, stable and prosperous Nigeria on the fundamental principles of democracy, good governance, free enterprise and the rule of law. Those are worthy principles which Nigeria shares with the United Nations family.

As a main theme of this session's general debate, "Responding to climate change" is most appropriate. the African continent is particularly vulnerable to the impact of climate change. In our collective determination to meet this challenge, African leaders at the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU), which met in Addis Ababa last January, decided to integrate climate change issues into all sustainable development initiatives at the national and regional levels.

Nigeria reiterates its commitment to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. While applauding the successful outcome of the high-level event on climate change that was held here two days ago, on 24 September, we affirm that much more needs to be done.

It has been seven years since world leaders met in this Hall for the Millennium Assembly and committed themselves to ridding Africa of its most pressing socioeconomic and political challenges in order to allow the continent move with the rest of the world. While tangible progress has been made in a few areas, the continent is still bedevilled by great challenges.

The continued festering of the Darfur crisis remains a blight on the collective conscience of the international community, one which the Assembly needs to address with the utmost urgency. The humanitarian crisis has reached a critical level. The Abuja Peace Agreement, which Nigeria helped to facilitate, remains the reference point for a comprehensive settlement of the crisis. However, the lack of full implementation of the Agreement raises serious cause for concern, and we call on all parties to respect their commitments and help drive the peace process forward. We continue to support the process and reaffirm our support for the African Union — United Nations hybrid force in the Sudan.

It is imperative that the concerted fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic, malaria, tuberculosis and related diseases not lose momentum. At the national level, we in Nigeria have consistently taken concrete measures to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS and to increase funding for the National Action Committee on AIDS. We appreciate the financial and material assistance from our development partners in this regard, but our continent cries out for even more intensified collective efforts at ridding Africa of this and other pandemics.

Two years ago, we appraised our performance against the set targets of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and realized that unless concrete and more determined actions were taken, the overarching aim of meeting the 2015 targets of poverty eradication would remain a fantasy. We recognize that the primary responsibility for social and economic development rests mostly with individual States. Within the ambit of the African Union's New Partnership for Africa's Development, the nations of Africa are practically facing up to the continent's economic and sociopolitical development challenges through the adoption and engendering of a new political culture that will be conducive to long-term development.

Through such initiatives as the African Union's African Peer Review Mechanism, our programme of self-monitoring and self-assessment, as well as the institutionalization of the ideals of democracy and good governance, Africa has clearly defined an assured course to economic regeneration and political stability.

What Africa seeks from the international community is genuine partnership for economic development. This should be manifested in a global economic system predicated on fairness, justice and equity, one that ensures fair trade terms and recognizes the centrality of mutuality in prosperity. More specifically, Africa requires massive and focused foreign investment in the development of critical infrastructure across the continent.

Let me say that we in Nigeria are wholly committed to the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (resolution 60/288) in the fight against international terrorism. As a follow-up to that commitment, Nigeria has established four counter-terrorism centres in the country, in addition to the Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit, which, together with the Central Bank of Nigeria, monitors banking transactions as part of the mechanism to locate and terminate the illegal transfer of funds for terrorist and other criminal acts, including money laundering. Nigeria reiterates its condemnation of all acts of terrorism and calls upon the international community to muster the political will necessary to confront and check this menace.

Nigeria affirms its abiding faith in the ideals and objectives of the United Nations. We believe that a strengthened and restructured United Nations would be best placed to address the complex challenges facing our world today. In that regard, my delegation will continue to collaborate with other Member States to press for comprehensive reform of the United Nations system, including the much-desired expansion of the Security Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories in order to reflect the realities of today's world. The situation whereby Africa is totally excluded from permanent membership of the Council is unfair and untenable and must be rectified.

The challenges that confront our world today call for renewed purpose, renewed resolve, renewed courage and renewed respect for human dignity. Posterity beckons us to a real test of our sense of duty. We cannot afford to fail that test. I assure the Assembly that Nigeria will continue to support the United Nations in our collective aspirations for a safer, fairer, more just and more prosperous world.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Umaru Yar'Adua, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Mikheil Saakashvili, President of Georgia

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of Georgia.

Mr. Mikheil Saakashvili, President of Georgia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Mikheil Saakashvili, President of Georgia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Saakashvili: I am grateful for the opportunity today to address this sixty-second annual gathering of the General Assembly.

On behalf of my nation, I would like to congratulate the Secretary-General on his innovative leadership and on the exceptional progress he has made in his first nine months. His steadfast vision for peace in Darfur, his commitment to rallying the world to combat climate change and his determination to eradicate global poverty stand true to the founding principles of this institution.

Let me also extend my congratulations to Mr. Srgjan Kerim on his assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly and express our appreciation to his predecessor, Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, for her very effective leadership.

Today, in this great Hall, we have an opportunity to reaffirm one of the core principles of the United Nations — the right of every individual to pursue a life of liberty in dignity — by voicing our support for hundreds of thousands of peaceful protesters, monks and ordinary citizens, daring to seek freedom for the people of Myanmar. We must stand fast with them. It is my deepest hope that we will look back and remember this saffron revolution of the Burmese monks as another step in the inevitable march of liberty across the planet. It echoes the rose and orange revolutions that freed the peoples of Georgia and Ukraine from hopelessness and stagnation just a few years ago.

When we returned Georgia to its rightful path of peace, democracy and transparency, we did so in the

knowledge that our country was not an island. We knew that, in order for our freedom to endure, we would have to help advance the peaceful aspirations of others around the world, as a responsible member of the international community of democratic nations. That is why Georgia has lent its sons and daughters to peacekeeping efforts in Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq. And just this month, we committed a new battalion to serve under French command in Kabul.

This is why we have reached out to our neighbours in Europe, Central Asia and beyond to promote peace through cooperation, trade and deeper engagement. Together, we are working to help ensure new and diverse supplies of energy for European and global markets. We contribute to the integrated effort by building new roads, railways and pipelines that weave together the countries of our region, ensuring that people and goods flow across our borders in a manner that is safe, legal, predictable and fair. In short, our vision for the region is guided by the belief that mutual interdependence brings mutual benefit.

I believe that the people of Georgia have served as a catalyst and a living example of how governing transparently, through democratic principles, breeds lasting stability and shared prosperity. This is not, of course, a new path for Georgia, but rather a return to our European home and our European vocation, so deeply enshrined in our national identity and history.

And, while our most challenging relationship today remains with our neighbours in the Russian Federation, my Government is committed to addressing this subject through diplomatic means, in partnership with the international community. I can say this with confidence, because Georgia is a nation that is rooted in justice, the rule of law and democracy. This is an irreversible choice made by the people of my country. For evidence of that, one merely has to look at how Georgia has responded to the many provocations it has faced in the past year, which range from missile attacks to full-scale embargoes and even destructive pogroms. Rather than lash out angrily, we have redoubled our commitment to democratic development and comprehensive reform. My Government and I have done everything we can to show how much can be achieved when good governance opens the door to the development of human potential.

Today Georgia's economy is growing at over 14 per cent. Our gross domestic product per capita has more than doubled in four years. Corruption is the lowest among transition economies around the world and one of the lowest in Europe, according to the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. And as of today, our country has taken its place alongside some of the most developed economies in the world like Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Singapore and Hong Kong, Iceland, when the World Bank and the International Financial Corporation ranked Georgia as the 18th easiest and best place to do business because of institutionalized transparency and a lack of corruption.

We were 140th in world — one of the worst rankings — and now we have one of the best rankings for business and in terms of economic development and economic conditions. That is proof of what can be achieved when institutions function and when rhetoric is replaced with results.

Four years ago, I spoke at this Assembly about Georgia being a test case for the modern challenges of democratic transition. Today, it is clear that Georgia's transition has led to real transformation. I could recite a long list of other successes since the Rose Revolution and, equally, I could elaborate upon the many profound challenges that remain. But let me focus on what is perhaps our most important duty — the imperative to create a better future for the next generation.

We will not rest until every school in Georgia is filled with empowered and confident students, who have the benefit of new books, a modern curriculum, full Internet access, many computers — until every student gets a computer — and motivated teachers. Just four years ago our schools were barren and desperate — many lacked desks, windows, heat and, above all, hope.

Today, reforms in education are sowing the seeds of lasting prosperity, and our students are leading the way. That is the Georgia we promised. And that is the Georgia we have created. It is also the Georgia we will and we must defend.

For our democratic project is not yet complete — far from it. Georgia today is not whole. The vast majority of residents from the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia have been unable to reap the benefits of the Rose Revolution that I have just shared with you.

Tens of thousands of children in these regions are raised amidst the sounds of gunfire instead of

fireworks. Their homes are not their own, and their dreams are distant and frightening. They are prisoners of the morally repugnant politics of ethnic cleansing, division, violence and indifference.

But we will not rest until justice is restored, until the rule of law is accessible to everybody.

Today, I regret to say that signs of hope are few and far between. The story of Abkhazia, where up to 500,000 men, women, and children were forced to flee in the 1990s, is of particular relevance — one of the more abhorrent, horrible and yet forgotten ethnic cleansings of the twentieth century. In the time since Russian peacekeepers were deployed there, more than 2,000 Georgians have perished and a climate of fear has persisted.

It is worth pausing to remember that today's Abkhazia is populated by less than 20 per cent of its pre-war population. It is an area with very fertile land, beautiful beaches, lovely resort areas and wonderful landscapes. Yet it is all deserted, houses have been destroyed, and signs of hopelessness, desperation and annihilation abound.

The brutal campaign of ethnic cleansing uprooted ethnic Georgians, Armenians, Estonians, Greeks, Jews, Russians and others who had lived peacefully in that land for centuries, creating a depopulated and criminalized wasteland.

President Ilves of Estonia spoke today of the parallels between Darfur and Abkhazia. Of course, we should remember Darfur, but we should not forget Abkhazia. President Ilves knows of what he speaks because tens of thousands of ethnic Estonians were also deported and their houses confiscated. In 1992, the Estonian Government had to evacuate some of these people by air under the fire of the people that were attacking this peaceful middle-class population in Abkhazia.

The United Nations has tried to bring peace to this region, but it has not succeeded in making Georgia whole again, despite its unwavering recognition of Georgian sovereignty. Every day that passes without a peaceful resolution to the conflict, every day in which forcibly displaced persons are not allowed to return home, marks a slow erosion of the credibility of this House and of its ability to fulfil its mission. We cannot allow this situation to continue.

Fourteen years have passed without a single in-depth analysis being carried out as to why peace has not triumphed or why the legal framework has not been restored and has therefore failed. For this reason and in order to inject a new and positive dynamic into the process, I am calling on the United Nations today to launch a comprehensive review of all aspects of the Georgian peace process. The necessity of this review of the peace process is self-evident, and it must result in fundamental changes.

Changes are necessary in the negotiation format, which has stalled, and is stagnant and counterproductive. That in turn must lead to real changes in operations on the ground. Years of biased and unbalanced actions by supposed peacekeeping forces must be replaced with competent and neutral ones that will be engaged in peacebuilding and peacemaking, rather than in trying to maintain the so-called status quo, while in fact being biased and preserving the injustices that have happened there.

That is the only path forward. Out of this process, we can expect genuine and relevant changes in the legal framework. Although we need effective economic rehabilitation, the main thing we need is a meaningful and implementable plan to bring about the return of displaced persons, guaranteeing their property rights, the establishment of lasting security and the resumption of direct dialogue on the ground without any preconditions and without any adverse movements from sides that are against dialogue.

Because of the lack of political will, countless lives in that part of Georgia are being wasted. And inaction has its costs.

One of the greatest voices for peace in the last century, Martin Luther King, captured the essence of the problem when he said:

> "Man's inhumanity to man is not only perpetrated by the vitriolic actions of those who are bad. It is also perpetrated by the vitiating inaction of those who are good".

Let us fill the vacuum with new energy, new commitments and a new common resolve. I want to take this opportunity to elaborate on the foundations of our proposals for a lasting and peaceful settlement. First, we offer the alternative of security and prosperity to those who have been poisoned by the separatist illusion. We offer and recognize the right to full self-

governance for all who live in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, within our sovereign territorial borders under international guarantees. We offer constitutional changes to enshrine the protection of minorities including language rights, the protection of culture and education. And we are even willing to offer special property rights to all interested groups in order to enhance their identities and to guarantee and secure that their long-term survival will be protected by the State and the international community. Finally, we offer and welcome a robust role for the European Union and a greater role for its engagement on the ground.

In short, we offer a level of autonomy grounded in the very same principles that have guided the rest of Europe in promoting peace and prosperity throughout its multi-ethnic tapestry.

The continued ignorance of the ethnic cleansing in Abkhazia, Georgia is a stain on the moral account book of the international community. These disputes are no longer about ethnic grievances; they are about the manipulation of greed by a tiny minority of activists, militants, militias and their foreign backers, at the expense of the local population, the displaced and those who are deprived of their property and fundamental rights — even the right to speak and study in their own language.

The choice is between a Georgia that is willing to welcome them back with every constitutional recognition of their identity and their rights or a bleak future where they are the objects of propaganda, fear and poverty, and where they are pawns in a big geopolitical game.

I have faith that we will succeed. Their masters and foreign manipulators will not succeed.

Where does the international community stand? My dear friends, that is the essence of the issue.

But the violent hold of the armed separatists and their patrons is not unbreakable. In South Ossetia, the courage of the people, of common men and women who have chosen dialogue over division, and reconciliation over recriminations, is making a difference. Unfortunately, those who do not share a vision of peace and reconciliation have chosen to oppose peace in South Ossetia, fearful that the power of the people and the desire to live in freedom may undermine their cynical plans.

As I speak before you today, elements from Russia are actively and illegally building a new, large military base in the small town of Java, in South Ossetia, in the middle of Georgia, on the other side the Caucasian ridge, very far from Russian territory, hoping that arms and violence will triumph over the will of the people. And this dangerous escalation is taking place under the very noses of international monitors, whose job it is to demilitarize the territory.

I have brought a very conclusive body of evidence with me today, to show our friends in the international community the truth that others conceal. I bring that disturbing fact to the Assembly's attention because reckless acts such as that must be highlighted and countered. Our collective job today is not to ask how this is possible. Rather, it is to act with determination and unity. We have all the evidence, we have video footage, documented facts and all the other evidence, and we will present it to the international community, to anybody who has voiced interest in this issue.

Sooner rather than later, the march of liberty will prevail. In the past year, the residents of South Ossetia have started down a different path. They are seeking to participate in Georgia's economic growth, to benefit from our new hospitals and our revived schools and to share in and contribute to our democracy. It is the ordinary residents of South Ossetia engaged in extraordinary acts of heroism who are making a difference. It is the children who took their summer holidays on Georgia's seacoast, only to return home and be barred from their schools or menaced by official authorities, who will tear down the barriers of hate. It is the residents rebuilding their towns under gunfire. I have specially met with the workers who continued to build schools, movie theatres and even discos under the gunfire of elements that wish to stop them. These are very courageous people of different ethnicities who want to live in peace and who are willing to take risks, even with their own lives for the sake of peace and a better future for their children.

It is the courage of local leaders such as Dmitry Sanakoev, a former separatist leader of South Ossetia who once bore arms against Georgia, who will lead the way. He was chosen by the people of South Ossetia in democratic elections to represent them. This vision will be embraced. I believe we should respect the courageous expression of the ethnic Ossetians who have decided to take that path within Georgia.

The only obstacle to the integration of South Ossetia is a separatist regime that basically consists of elements from security services from neighbouring Russia that have no historical ethnic or cultural links to the territory whatsoever. I think that is a very temporary development Now is the time to seize this historic opportunity to avoid the escalation of violence, which is a possibility and a major risk, especially in the territory of South Ossetia.

In closing, I would like to share the insights of a woman whose name is on our minds and in our hearts today: Aung San Suu Kyi. Her courage, her resolve and her reflections on peace and democracy, cannot be imprisoned. They travel across every border and barrier to inspire us all. Her words are of profound relevance to the people of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. I believe they also must be a beacon for all of us in this Hall.

> "Even under the most crushing State machinery, courage rises up again and again, for fear is not the natural state of civilized man. It is man's vision of a world fit for rational, civilized humanity which leads him to dare and suffer to build societies free from want and fear."

Those words poignantly reflect what is taking place today in the streets of Burma.

In our own corner of the world, for the past four years, the people of Georgia have invested their own sweat and treasure to build such a society — one free from want and fear. We now must ensure that Georgia whole and free includes all the people of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

I believe I have been clear in stating Georgia's intentions and equally clear as to where we are unshakeable in our principles — principles, I stress, that are shared by all nations that seek legality and stability in the international system.

We are committed to a peaceful and honest path. Unfortunately, our interlocutors do not seem to be. This morning, a senior Russian official made the very unconstructive, unsubstantiated and untrue accusation that Georgian forces killed two innocent people in Upper Abkhazia. What the senior Russian official failed to say, however, is that one of the people was a lieutenant colonel of the Russian military and that he was killed during a law enforcement operation against armed separatist insurgents. One has to wonder, what was a lieutenant colonel in the Russian army doing on in the Georgian forests, organizing and leading a group of armed insurgents on a mission of subversion and violence? I want to ask our Russian friends: is there not enough territory in Russia? Are there not enough forests in Russia for Russian officers not to die in Georgian forests, on Georgian territory, for them not to fight on foreign territory for God knows what cause for their nation? Whatever the explanation, we regret any loss of life. That person was recruited from Russian peacekeepers and State and local militia. We do not wish anybody such an end to their life.

Indeed, we will do everything possible to avoid violence and further hostility and confrontation. This reckless and dangerous pattern of behaviour must not continue.

In conclusion, I want to express the gratitude of Georgia for the efforts of the United Nations and its staff. I trust that I have demonstrated that we have the opportunity and, in Georgia, the desire to resolve our common challenges so that the international community can commit its resources to resolving the great challenges of our age. Let us not lose any more time.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of Georgia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Mikheil Saakashvili, President of Georgia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Robert G. Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe.

Mr. Robert G. Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations Mr. Robert G. Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Mugabe: Allow me to congratulate Mr. Kerim on his election to preside over this Assembly. We are confident that through his stewardship, issues on the agenda of the sixty-second session will be dealt with in a balanced manner and to

the satisfaction of all. Allow me also to pay tribute to his predecessor, Ms. Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, who steered the work of the sixty-first session in a very competent and impartial manner. Her ability to identify the crucial issues facing the world today will be remembered as the hallmark of her presidency.

We extend our hearty welcome to the new Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, who has taken up this challenging job requiring dynamism in confronting the global challenges of the twenty-first century. Balancing global interests and steering the United Nations in a direction that gives hope to the multitudes of the poor, the sick, the hungry and the marginalized is indeed a mammoth task. We would like to assure him that Zimbabwe will continue to support an open, transparent and all-inclusive multilateral approach in dealing with those global challenges.

Climate change is one of the most pressing global issues of our time. Its negative impact is greatest in developing countries, particularly those on the African continent. We believe that, if the international community is going to seriously address the challenges of climate change, then we need to get our priorities right. In Zimbabwe, the effects of climate change have become more evident in the past decade as we have witnessed, alongside our neighbours, increased and recurrent droughts, as well as occasional floods, leading to enormous humanitarian challenges.

We are for a United Nations that recognizes the equality of sovereign nations and peoples, whether big or small. We are averse to a body in which the economically and militarily powerful behave like bullies, trampling on the rights of weak and smaller States, as sadly happened in Iraq. In the light of those inauspicious developments, this Organization must surely examine the essence of its authority and the extent of its power when challenged in this manner.

Such challenges to the authority of the United Nations and its Charter underpin our repeated call for the revitalization of the General Assembly, itself the most representative organ of the United Nations. The General Assembly should be more active in all areas, including those of peace and security. The encroachment of some United Nations organs upon the work of the General Assembly is of great concern to us. Thus, any process of revitalizing or strengthening the General Assembly should necessarily avoid eroding the principle of the accountability of all principal and subsidiary organs to the General Assembly.

Once again, we reiterate our position that the Security Council as presently constituted is not democratic. In its present configuration, the Council has shown that it is not in a position to protect the weaker States, who find themselves at loggerheads with a marauding super-Power. Most importantly, justice demands that any Security Council reform should redress the fact that Africa is the only continent without a permanent seat and veto power in the Security Council. Africa's demands are known and enunciated in the Ezulwini Consensus.

We further call for the United Nations system to refrain from interfering in matters that are clearly the domain of Member States and are not a threat to international peace and security. Development at country level should continue to be country-led and not be subject to the whims and caprices of powerful donor States.

Zimbabwe won its independence on 18 April 1980 after a protracted war against British colonial imperialism that denied its people human rights and democracy. That colonial system which suppressed and oppressed us enjoyed the support of many countries of the West who were signatories to the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Even after 1945, it would appear that the Berlin Conference of 1884, through which Africa was parcelled out to colonial European powers, has remained stronger than the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is, therefore, clear that for the West, vested economic interests and racial and ethnocentric considerations have proved stronger than Western adherence to principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The West still negates our sovereignties by controlling our resources, in the process making us mere chattels in our own lands, mere minders of the West's transnational interests. In my own country and other sister States in southern Africa, the most visible form of this colonial control has been control over land despoiled from us at the onset of British colonialism. That control largely persists, although it stands firmly challenged in Zimbabwe, thereby triggering the current stand-off between us and Britain, which is supported by her cousin States, most notably the United States and Australia. Mr. Bush, Mr. Blair and now

Mr. Brown's sense of human rights precludes our people's right to their God-given resources, which must, in our view, be controlled by our people. I am termed dictator — and yesterday the General Assembly heard Mr. Bush in this Hall calling my Government a demagogic regime — because I have rejected this supremacist view and frustrated the neo-colonialists in their endeavours to keep us as slaves in our own country.

Clearly, the history of the struggle for our own national and people's rights is unknown to the President of the United States of America. He thinks the Declaration of Human Rights started with his terms in office. He thinks he can introduce to us, who bore the brunt of the struggle for the freedoms of our peoples, the virtues of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. What rank hypocrisy! I spent 11 precious years of my life in the jail of a white Englishman whose freedom and well being I assured and protected from the first day of Zimbabwe's independence, and that was Ian Smith. I lost a further 15 years fighting white injustice in my country. Ian Smith was responsible for the deaths of well over 50,000 of my people. I bear scars of his tyranny, which Britain and America condoned. I meet his victims every day. Yet, he walks freely today. He farms freely; he has a farm of over 500 hectares. He talks freely, associates freely under our black Government. We taught him democracy. We gave him back his humanity. He would have faced a different fate here and in Europe, if the 50,000 he killed had been Europeans. Africa has not called for a Nuremberg trial against the white world, which committed heinous crimes against humanity. It has not hunted perpetrators of this genocide, many of whom live to this day; nor has it received reparations from those who have offended against it. Instead, it is Africa that is in the dock. It is Mugabe, and not the British Prime Minister, who is in the dock, facing trial from the same world that persecuted us for centuries.

Let Mr. Bush read history correctly. Let him realize that, both personally and in his representative capacity as the current President of the United States, he stands for this "civilization" that occupied, colonized, incarcerated and killed. He has much to atone for and very little to lecture us about on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. His hands drip with the innocent blood of many nationalities, and, today, with the blood of the Iraqis. But he still kills. He kills in Iraq. He kills in Afghanistan. And he is supposed to be our teacher in human rights?

He imprisons. He imprisons and tortures at Guantanamo. He imprisoned and tortured at Abu Ghraib. He has secret torture chambers in Europe. Yes, he imprisons even here in the United States, with his jails today carrying more blacks than his universities can ever enrol. He even suspends the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Take Guántanamo for example. At that concentration camp, international law does not apply. The national laws of the people there do not apply. Laws of the United States of America do not apply. Only Bush's law applies. Can the international community accept being lectured by this man on the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights? Definitely not.

The President returned to the Chair.

We are alarmed that under his leadership basic rights of his own people and those of the rest of the world have summarily been rolled back. America is primarily responsible for rewriting core tenets of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We all seem guilty for 9/11. Mr. Bush thinks he stands above all structures of governance, whether national or international. At home, he apparently does not need the Congress. He defies it. Abroad, he does not need the United Nations; he does not need international law and opinion. "I will go to Iraq," he said, "with or without the United Nations" — that is, with or without international law, in defiance of it.

This forum did not sanction Blair's and Bush's misadventures in Iraq. Did we say yes to it? Did we say yes to the attack on Iraq? The two rode roughshod over the United Nations and international opinion. Almighty Bush: perhaps some might regard him as their god. No, he is not my god. I have but one God. He is in heaven — *pater noster, qui es in caelis*. Indeed, he wants us to pray to him. We say no to him and encourage him to get out of Iraq. Indeed, he should mend his ways before he clambers up the pulpit to deliver pieties of democracy. Is he qualified to speak of democracy? Is he qualified to speak of human rights when he is shedding blood every day?

The British and the Americans have gone on a relentless campaign of destabilizing and vilifying my country. They have sponsored surrogate forces to challenge lawful authority in my country. They seek regime change. It is they who seek regime change, not

my people. But they think they are entitled to change governments, placing themselves in the role of the Zimbabwean people in whose collective will democracy places the right to define and change regimes. And they want to talk of democracy when they are behaving that way.

Let those sinister Governments be told here and now that Zimbabwe will not allow a regime change authored by outsiders. We do not interfere with their systems in America and Britain, where they steal elections, as he did during his first election. We do not interfere. Mr. Bush and Mr. Brown have no role to play in our national affairs. They are outsiders — and mischievous outsiders — and should therefore keep out. The colonial sun set a long time ago in Africa — in 1980 in the case of Zimbabwe. And hence, Zimbabwe will never be a colony again — never, ever.

We do not deserve sanctions. We are Zimbabweans and we know how to deal with our own problems. We have done so in the past, well before Bush and Brown were known politically. We have our own regional and continental organizations and communities. In that vein, I wish to express my country's gratitude to President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa who, on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), successfully facilitated the dialogue between my ruling party and the opposition parties, which yielded the agreement that has now resulted in the constitutional provisions being finally adopted — the amendments to the constitution, which both parties agreed to and which paved the way to the elections for which various parties are now campaigning. Consequently, we will be holding multiple democratic elections in March 2008. Indeed, we have always had timeous general and presidential elections since our independence.

We want to be left alone. We will interact with those in our region and those in organizations to which we belong.

In conclusion, let me stress once more that the strength of the United Nations lies in its universality and its impartiality as it implements its mandate to promote peace and security, economic and social development, human rights and international law, as outlined in the Charter. Zimbabwe stands ready to play its part in all efforts and programmes aimed at achieving those noble goals. The Charter of the United Nations is our Charter also in Africa and we uphold it. Wrath unto him who defies the Charter.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Robert G. Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Evo Morales Ayma, President of the Republic of Bolivia

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Bolivia.

Mr. Evo Morales Ayma, President of the Republic of Bolivia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Evo Morales Ayma, President of the Republic of Bolivia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Morales Ayma (*spoke in Spanish*): This is the second time I have addressed the Assembly in my 20 months as President. I come here to share our experiences with the Presidents of the many countries of our world. I wish to take this opportunity to say how pleased I am at the election of a new Secretary-General, who will be leading the international Organization for the good of humankind, and above all, for the good of the abandoned and the dispossessed. For that reason, I wish to briefly comment on my own country.

For the first time in Bolivian history, the groups most forgotten, despised, hated and reviled throughout the history of Bolivia — we indigenous peoples — have assumed the leadership of our country to change our beloved Bolivia — to make political and economic changes, to reshape and re-establish our country, orienting it towards searching for unity, respecting our differences and respecting our identity so that we can work together to resolve our economic and social problems.

In this brief period, I have felt and seen that it will be difficult and will mean fighting for the equality and justice of peoples, of all of us who live in the homeland. But at the same time, we shall do so with a

great deal of strength, because the popular movement, the indigenous movement and the intellectuals and even the business and professional communities, have taken a chance on their land and their people, and are striving peacefully for democratization, ensuring a cultural revolution in my country.

But sometimes it is more important to regain our natural resources. I very much regret to say that in my country, during the neoliberal regimes, natural resources and State-owned enterprises were privatized under the pretext of capitalization. In fact, they decapitalized the country, claiming that private enterprise would be the solution for unemployment and corruption. We actually saw an increase in unemployment and in corruption. Just a few years ago, Bolivia was considered to be the world's runner-up of corruption, but now I am delighted to see that international organizations have said that there has been a great decrease in corruption in Bolivia. We want to eradicate it.

I want members to know that in 2005, before I became President of the Republic, Bolivia received only $300 million in revenue from hydrocarbons. That was a time when hydrocarbons, oil and natural gas were privatized, when they were given to the transnationals. Now that we have changed the oil laws and nationalized and recovered these very important natural resources, Bolivia will receive more than $2 billion in revenue this year.

For that reason, Bolivia wants to share its experience with all leaders and with all nations where natural resources have been privatized. It is important, with the strength of the people, to recover these natural resources so that they can benefit the people and the nation. Of course, I completely understand that companies have the right to recover the economic resources that they have invested. They have a right to profit, but not like in the past when all they were concerned with was plundering our natural resources.

The most important thing in all of this is that we have begun to decolonize Bolivia, both internally and externally. I say internally because my country previously had masters. If we look back at our history, there were masters that were descended from the viceroys, religious groups and the oligarchy. They ruled and the people were powerless. Now we are building up the power of the people so that the people are sovereign, not groups of families, and so that we, the peoples, have the right to decide on our future.

That is the best kind of democracy we can implement, because it does not mean merely accepting certain policies or being subjugated by masters or bosses in my country. When I say that we are decolonizing externally as well, I mean that right now, there are no ambassadors in my country who change or appoint ministers. Before, unfortunately, United States ambassadors changed and appointed ministers. That is over. Thus, we have begun to decolonize our country.

Once, policies were imposed on us by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. That is over too. I would like to share a little story about our country that I remember clearly. In 2003, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund told our leadership to choose between a gasoline tax and an income tax to avoid a deficit. The Government decided to put a tax on workers' wages. In two days more than 15 people died in Bolivia because of clashes among Bolivians.

Now let me say that last year, without income taxes, without gasoline taxes, Bolivia had a surplus thanks to the return of a natural resource, hydrocarbons, that is so important for my country.

That is why I say that we have begun external decolonization. We are gathering the proposals and initiatives of our peoples organized in civic and trade union forums, in particular people who have economic problems. They have the wisdom to propose initiatives and solutions from their own neighbourhoods and from their own trade unions. That is my experience, and so I think it is important to create people's power. Let social forces take the decisions, and let the leaders follow the wishes of the people. In that way we can resolve our problems.

Over the past few days I have listened to some very encouraging statements, but also some that were rather disappointing. They spoke, for example, of global warming and of climate change, and I know that many countries are victims of these natural phenomena. But I cannot understand why so many lives are lost to floods, interventionism, war and hunger? It seems that economic models are not going to solve the problems of humankind. I am all the more convinced of that after having heard many of those statements and the experiences that have been shared by world leaders. Concentrating capital in the hands of

the few is not a solution to the problems of humankind. Having the wealth of the world in the hands of the few does not solve the problems of human existence. Indeed, it exacerbates problems of the poor who inhabit planet Earth.

We talk of global warming and the melting of the ice, but we do not say where it comes from. I am convinced that it comes from that ill-termed globalization — or selective globalization: a globalization that does not respect plurality and that does not respect differences.

If we are to talk about globalization, first of all we must globalize the human being. I do not know how everyone here got to New York — or to the United States — but my delegation had many visa problems. Our parliamentarians could not obtain United States visas. When I arrived at the airport, I was blocked, and my ministers — my indigenous compatriots — were subjected to hours and hours of controls at the airport. Some of us, the representatives of countries, were practically threatened by our hosts, by President Bush. If that continues, perhaps we should seriously consider, as Presidents and nations, changing the site of the United Nations. I personally am not willing to come here to be the subject of investigation. I feel that the decolonization of the United Nations too should begin and that everyone should respect us, whether we are small or large, whether we have or do not have problems.

I listen to statements about glaciers melting, and they are made without addressing the underlying causes of melting and global warming. It is capitalism and the exaggerated, unrestricted form of industrialization in some countries which are creating so many problems on our continent and on planet Earth as a whole. When we organize alongside social movements to protest and condemn these unsustainable policies, these economic models that do not solve economic problems, then what we get is military bases and interventions, wars, demonization, accusations of terrorism, as though peoples had no right to speak out about their needs, their rights, or to formulate new approaches to saving lives and humankind.

I therefore believe that it is important for us, as Presidents, nations or delegates, to tell the truth in all sincerity about these economic problems, which are not exclusive to Bolivia, North America or South America. When the democratic change is under way in South America — i.e. the kind of democracy that liberates and does not submit to imperialism — there are further accusations and misrepresentations. There are accusations of people being cruel dictators, such as those I heard from the lips of President Bush yesterday with respect to the President of Cuba. I wish to greet all revolutionaries, especially President Fidel, for whom I have a great deal of respect. Fidel also sends troops to many countries, but they are sent to save lives, whereas the President of the United States sends troops to end human lives. Therefore, since we here today are presidents, let us think about life, humankind, how to save planet Earth and the question of climate change, which is a subject of ongoing debate throughout the world.

I am convinced that it is not possible for basic services to remain private enterprises. Fortunately, thanks to the foreign ministries of the Americas, water has been recognized as a human right. If water is a human right, it is important that it should become a public utility, instead of a private business. It is important that energy should now also be a human right. I hope that we can all ensure that energy is a human right. If energy is a human right, then it will never again be a private business. It must be a public utility so as to meet the needs of our people.

I cannot understand how we can continue, under the guise of hegemony or of concentrating capital in a few hands, to do damage to humankind, to affect the poor and to marginalize other needy sectors. I feel we are making statements here in order to change these economic policies that have done, and continue to do, so much damage and that are leading humankind down the path to genocide.

I still fail to understand why some countries are involved in an arms race. I cannot accept war. In Bolivia we are discussing, as a social and political endeavour, how a new political constitution could lead us to renounce war. I am convinced that war is the industry of death and that the arms race is one more industry that complements the industry of death. In this new millennium, how can countries and presidents keep thinking in terms of interventionism, authoritarianism and arrogance on the part of some countries towards other countries, and not think about humankind?

I believe that we must work together to save planet Earth. That is the most important thing, if we want to save life and humankind.

Yesterday, too, I heard, and tried to comprehend, statements about biofuels and agrofuels. I do not understand how we can make use of agricultural products or food when it comes to cars. I cannot accept that that is what the products of the earth should be for. I believe that food should be for human beings and that soil should be for life. Are we really going to divert our land and food resources to provide for automobiles because of a gasoline or diesel shortage? Two days ago, I said that if we are really talking about life, then let us give up luxury. It is important to give up luxury. We cannot continue to accumulate garbage, we cannot continue to think about just a few families instead of thinking about all of humankind. I think we have profound differences, when we talk about these matters of life and about our national majorities.

I want to take this opportunity to express thanks for the support received from everyone, with the exception of four Governments, for the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We feel very gratified. The peoples of the Americas have waited for over 500 years for their rights to be recognized. We are part of a culture of patience. I wish to say that the fact that we now have this Declaration does not mean that we will act vindictively towards others. Indigenous people are not vengeful. We are part of the culture of dialogue and, most fundamentally, part of the culture of life.

I want to ask the United Nations to convene very soon a United Nations world summit of indigenous peoples to compile data on different cultural experiences. We are compiling data on our experiences in Bolivia through a programme called "Living Well". To live better, one must sometimes exploit. To live better, one must sometimes rob. To live better, one must sometimes discriminate. To live better, one must sometimes plunder. But to live well means to live in community, collectively. This does not just apply to living among human beings. It also means living well in harmony with Mother Earth. The earth, for the indigenous movement, is something sacred. Mother Earth is our very life, it is Pacha Mama, as we say in our languages. Mother Earth cannot be turned into merchandise. Mother Earth cannot be turned into a business. If we talk about global warming, if we protest and fight global warming, let us remember that we are talking about Mother Earth. Since Mother Earth gives us life, we need to review our policies, but we also need to pay attention to what has been stated by our indigenous movement.

We have lived in communities, collectively. What is being debated is collectivism and community against capitalism. Let us continue to debate, to reclaim these ways of life in order to defend life and to save humankind.

I also want to take a moment to say that this new millennium must be the millennium of life, equality and justice, of respecting our identities and upholding human dignity. That is why we are talking about changing economic models, those systems that do harm to mankind. But if we want to make changes, then it is important for us to change ourselves first. Let us not be selfish, individualistic, greedy, ambitious or sectarian in our attitudes, concerning ourselves with just a few families instead of with the entire family on Mother Earth. So as presidents, as representatives of our different nations, we are talking about changing ourselves first, with a view to also changing economic models in a quest for equality and justice. During my 20 months as President, I have learned that I must work with the people and listen to their needs. There will always be groups who do not wish to lose their privileges, but those are ill-gotten privileges or privileges that enable them to use the State for family business rather than thinking of the families of others.

I have learned, during my 20 months as President, how wonderful it would have been to work for the homeland and not for money, how wonderful it would have been to work for those abandoned by the peoples, how wonderful it would have been to work together with people who do not have many economic problems but who cherish their homeland and want to work for it in solidarity and with a sense of complementarity.

I would also like to say that, as members know, we have a historic problem with our sister republic of Chile on the subject of the sea. We have now succeeded in laying the foundations of a certain trust between us: trust between our peoples, our Governments and our Presidents, through peoples' diplomacy. It is our hope that these historic claims can be worked on and resolved, within the framework of complementarity, because neighbouring countries, Latin American countries and the countries of the world need to work in a complementary way if we

want to resolve the problems of our peoples and nations. Complementarity is very important, and that is why we want to continue to work for humankind.

In conclusion — sometimes the red light on the rostrum makes one nervous, but never mind — I would like to say that I hope we can keep learning from events of this kind, in which so many participate. These are the best universities we have. But let us speak clearly and sincerely. Let us not falsify the truth, when we talk only about the effects of humankind's problems and not their causes. In that context, I want to say that it is important to change our economic models and eradicate capitalism.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Bolivia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Evo Morales Ayma, President of the Republic of Bolivia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Václav Klaus, President of the Czech Republic

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Czech Republic.

Mr. Václav Klaus, President of the Czech Republic, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Václav Klaus, President of the Czech Republic, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Klaus: Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-second session. I also welcome the highly respected Secretary-General to the first session of the Assembly convened since he assumed his post.

I would like to start by saying that my country is proud to be one of the founding fathers of the United Nations in its current form. The Czech Republic, a successor State of Czechoslovakia, participated actively in all kinds of United Nations activities in the past and it will continue to do so in the future. We take part in the work not only of the United Nations itself, but also of its specialized organizations and agencies such as UNESCO, the United Nations Development Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Health Organization, the International Atomic Energy Agency and many others. We have always supported any meaningful initiative that leads to the increase of stability and prosperity in the world.

I am proud to confirm that the Czech Republic has the ambition to be elected to the Security Council as a non-permanent member for the period 2008-2009. I believe that we can be trusted by the majority of Member countries and that we deserve their votes. We are convinced that we have already demonstrated our devotion to freedom, democracy, international cooperation, economic development and respect for the sovereignty of countries belonging to the community of nations. My country served in the Security Council in 1994-1995. We tried to do our best. We were reliable and committed to hard work. I can assure the Assembly that we will now do an even a better job.

We have always recognized the principal responsibility of the Security Council for maintaining peace and security. Since the 1990s, the Czech Republic has contributed to more than 20 United Nations peacekeeping missions and United Nations-mandated operations in the Balkans, Asia and Africa. We deeply believe in the prevention and non-violent resolution of disputes and conflicts. That can be proved by our own behaviour; witness the peaceful dissolution of Czechoslovakia in 1992. Over the past several years, we have also multiplied our official development assistance.

In the past 18 years, the Czech Republic has undergone radical and dynamic development, which was made possible by the fall of communism and by our rapid departure from that oppressive, inhuman and inefficient political, social and economic system. Our transformation strategy, based on the acceptance of political pluralism, parliamentary democracy and a market economy, was successful.

A further important impetus to our development was our approaching the European Union and our entry into it three years ago. Today, the Czech Republic is a full-fledged member of the Union and will hold the European Union presidency in the first half of 2009. It might be of interest to the Assembly that the slogan of the Czech presidency will be "Europe without barriers". We mean by that the removing of both

internal and external European Union barriers. I fully support that concept, as I strongly believe in the need to remove barriers that hinder economic progress, especially in developing countries.

We consider the United Nations to be an extremely important and, in fact, irreplaceable platform. There is no substitute for it in the current world. It is a platform for meetings and consultations, for dialogue and, eventually, for reaching agreements on treaties among nations sharing the same or similar values and political stances. This unique platform is based on the plurality of views of its 192 Member countries and on our mutual respect for our sometimes differing positions. The ambition of the United Nations is not, and should never be, the search for one obligatory, unitary view imposed by some of us on those who disagree.

I did not use the term "platform" by chance and without purpose. By using it, I implicitly object to the alternative concept: the concept of global governance based on the indefensible idea that the world can be globally governed, masterminded, controlled, managed and/or even planned. To aspire to do that is something we can never accept. It is an ambition based on the abuse of reason and on the pretence of knowledge. Democracy is something else.

There are some among us who prefer the operational efficiency — or the ability to act — of this Organization to the recognition of the existence of different views. They want to make decisions in an easier and faster way. Our communist past tells us that we should not do that. We also want the United Nations to be reasonably operational, but we categorically oppose that happening at the expense of individual Member States. We have to respect the views of individual member countries regardless of their size. It is crucial that every Member State has equal status and that its voice not be ignored.

We have to go forward. The United Nations needs changes. We do support reform of the United Nations, because the Organization should reflect the current situation in the world more than the situation of the era when it was founded. Some changes are inevitable, and we should discuss them seriously.

To our great regret, in the world at present we are witnessing many cases where there is a lack of freedom and democracy. Our task for the future is to minimize such cases. However, I do not see and hear the terms "freedom" and "democracy" as much or as often as they deserve. We hear other words more frequently — aid, government initiatives and interventions, social justice, positive rights, environment, resources, climate, problem solving, facing threats and global challenges among others.

Here we have to be very careful. We should support meaningful activities, not programmes that in effect put constraints on local development. We should use natural resources efficiently and protect the environment, but not in a way that restricts human activity and harms economic development. We would help global development more by reducing barriers than by providing conditional aid. Reducing protectionism and lowering export subsidies is a far more efficient way to help developing countries than anything else. We should not allow developing countries to be blocked from their own economic growth by additional burdens imposed upon them that they will not be able to bear.

At the conference on climate change held the day before yesterday, I resolutely warned against the unjustified alarmism of global-warming activists and their fellow-travellers in some Governments and international organizations, but even that potential problem, as well as any other, can never be solved without relying on freedom, free markets, free trade and other attributes of free society.

Preserving the environment is very important, but we have to be modest in our attempts to control the complexities of the world. Let us use the potential of this Organization as much as possible. Let us cooperate, let us listen to each other, let us negotiate to the last possible moment and let us try to understand others. The Czech Republic tries to follow those rules.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Czech Republic for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Václev Klaus, President of the Czech Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Rafael Correa, President of the Republic of Ecuador

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Ecuador.

Mr. Rafael Correa, President of the Republic of Ecuador, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Rafael Correa, President of the Republic of Ecuador, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Correa (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to begin my statement by recalling the commitment to fight poverty, in force since September 2000, when 189 countries signed the Millennium Declaration, which included the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). On that agreement we undertook to meet by 2015 some basic goals on the path of human development.

Today, from a Government that has declared in Ecuador a citizens' revolution, one that is democratic, ethical and nationalist, we wish to set out some critical thoughts with regard to the very concept of the MDGs, their limitations and the dangers that minimum programmes of that nature entail, in particular with regard to the profound social and economic inequalities that exist on the planet.

The first limitation of the MDGs is that they constitute a minimum as a poverty-reducing strategy. Our goal is to go much further than such minimums by going into greater depth on those objectives and incorporating others. The fact that we subscribe exclusively to a focus on minimum needs, such as that presented in the MDGs, carries a high risk that in seeking to satisfy our consciences we limit the aspirations for social change.

I think it is fair to say that there are two thresholds by which we can characterize the lives of people. The first has to do with the indispensable abilities of human beings to survive within a society and without which life could not be called human. The second refers to the capacities that allow each individual to be fulfilled within that society. We are speaking not only about subsistence, but of the right to enjoy a life that is worthy of living.

Ecuador believes that to have the goal of living on $1 plus 1 cent per day — in order to supposedly overcome extreme poverty or to avoid dying prematurely, as one might deduce from the MDGs — does not lead to a dignified life. The development of public policies in a country that is attempting to bring about radical change — as is the case in Ecuador — cannot be satisfied with those minimum objectives. Obviously, avoiding the premature death of girls and boys or of pregnant women is an objective that nobody would question. However, if we base ourselves only on that, we run the risk of agreeing that human life is simply a process of resistance, the aim of which is to extend someone's existence by a few more hours.

What we propose therefore are common goals, not only with regard to living minimums but with regard to social maximums as well. For example, we feel that it is possible to draw on diverse identities, to build and restore public areas, to guarantee access to justice and to have work which enables people to enjoy the right to support themselves and to have time for contemplation, artistic creation and recreation — goals that are already contained in the national development plan that is being implemented by the Government of Ecuador.

Accordingly, we renounce the idea of a historically inevitable present to which we must surrender by simply looking for minimums that are clearly basic. Furthermore, to be satisfied with the minimum also means — and that is very serious — legitimizing the reality that we experience because the minimum will not alter the distance and power relationships between individuals and between societies. Hence, we also favour the recognition of equal dignity for all human beings. Granting some people certain minimums must be an initial and temporary goal and must never be considered a modus operandi of public policy. For that means that the "beneficiary" is placed in a position of inferiority compared to everyone else. In other words, it means that their dignity is not recognized as equal with everyone else's. In fact, it is no accident that international bureaucracies such as the World Bank always suggest producing poverty reports, but never consider publishing inequality reports.

For this reason, perhaps the best way to reduce poverty with dignity is to reduce social, economic, territorial, environmental and cultural gaps. One of my Government's main goals is thus to reduce inequality in an endogenous development framework of economic inclusion and socio-territorial cohesion, domestically as well as within the global system. And along the same lines, we in Ecuador are seeking to apply the rule of human rights and universal values. On the other hand, the long and sad neoliberal night proposed —

from an existential perspective with its consequent absolutism of the market — social programmes that ended up by breaking up society into as many parts as there are social groups.

However, a national plan and a change in the power relationships within a society do not mean that all the fragments will come together. There is no claim that, by some twist of fate, these will acquire meaning and coherence and will assemble themselves like the pieces of a puzzle — even if some of the pieces are missing. It is indispensable to have a common plan that must be constantly redesigned and whose goal must be that we all want to be part of it.

That is why, in Ecuador, we are creating our national development plan in a democratic fashion. We know that without everyone's participation in society's basic decisions, no country can legitimize its public decision-making and make it more efficient. We must change a political practice employed by the traditional sectors, with their technocrats and elites, and return speech and action to those who should be the owners, protagonists and beneficiaries of public policy.

I would like furthermore to point out that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) offer a vision of development that is linked to consumption and a strategy linked to processes of economic liberalization. Our view on development is very different from that. We understand development to be the attainment of a good standard of living for everyone, in peace and in harmony with nature, and with the indefinite extension of human cultures. In that respect, we are extremely happy to see that the Assembly has broadly debated the devastating and unjust effects of climate change.

Ecuador has submitted a specific and innovative proposal to contribute to the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions and to the preservation of biodiversity: our Yasuni-ITT proposal. It involves a commitment not to extract some 920 million barrels of oil, thereby avoiding the emission of approximately 111 million tons of carbon that would come from the burning of this fossil fuel. However, that will mean that we will have to forgo significant investments of around $720 million each year, a very significant amount for the economy of Ecuador.

We are prepared to make this huge sacrifice, but we also ask for shared responsibility on the part of the international community, particularly on the part of developed countries, the planet's main predators, and for a minimum compensation for the environmental benefits that we are generating. That would be an extraordinary example of global collective action, setting aside rhetoric in favour of concrete facts and practical actions: not only would it reduce global warming for the benefit of the whole planet, but it would also bring about a new way of thinking about economics in the twenty-first century, where the generation of value is compensated, not just the generation of goods.

Speaking of cultures, we were very happy to see that the General Assembly recently adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (resolution 61/295), which was sponsored very actively by Ecuador. The Declaration is an instrument that had to wait more than 20 years to be adopted and that will be the fundamental charter for the protection of human rights of our indigenous peoples.

Finally, the good living that we are talking about presupposes that genuine individual freedoms, opportunities and potentials be enhanced. An immoral paradox arises here: at the world level, we are promoting the free movement of goods and capital, looking for the highest profitability. But, on the other hand, we are penalizing the free circulation of people who are looking for decent jobs. That is quite simply intolerable and absolutely unsustainable from an ethical point of view.

For the Government of Ecuador, there are no illegal human beings. There is no such thing, and the United Nations must insist on this point. There is no such person as an illegal human being. It is not permissible to think in that way. We are working actively to bring about changes in the shameful international migration policies, particularly those of the countries of the so-called first world, without forgetting, of course, that our greatest responsibility is to build a country that will guarantee decent life as a way of preventing forced exodus because of poverty and exclusion.

We must not be misled by those who proclaim the end of ideologies and the end of history. Conservatives want to make us believe that we live in the best of all possible worlds and that we have to abandon any attempt at change, any attempt to build our own individual and collective identity, any attempt to build our own history. In the face of such a miserly and self-satisfied worldview, we say that it is possible to have

collective action that is both aware and democratic, in order to direct our lives and organize world society in a different way with a more human face. Our understanding of development obliges us to recognize one another, understand one another and appreciate one another, so that we can move towards self-realization and the building of a shared future. Ecuador invites the Assembly to build this world, this dream.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Ecuador for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Rafael Correa, President of the Republic of Ecuador, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Lech Kaczyński, President of the Republic of Poland

The President: The Assembly will hear an address by the President of the Republic of Poland.

Mr. Lech Kaczyński, President of the Republic of Poland, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Lech Kaczyński, President of the Republic of Poland, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Kaczyński (*spoke in Polish; English text provided by the delegation*): I wish to begin by conveying my respect and gratitude to Ms. Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, who presided over the sixty-first session of the General Assembly. I also sincerely congratulate her successor, Mr. Srgjan Kerim, the newly elected President of the General Assembly at its sixty-second session.

The current session is the best proof that we live in a world of numerous contradictions and multiple approaches to the basic issues facing humankind today. We can say that what some people took to be obvious following the fall of communism in 1989, which came to be called the end of history in the academic world, was not borne out by reality. History is rife with such contradictions, which are linked above all to inequalities in economic development between various countries and regions. Echoes of those inequalities are heard every year in this Assembly Hall, and we have heard them today as well.

The problem is closely tied to an issue that has been discussed in the past few days in the course of the high-level event on climate change. I thank the Secretary-General for his initiative of convening that event. The topic of global warming is one of the key themes of this session. The problem can be considered from various perspectives.

First, as President Václav Klaus of the Czech Republic noted, the causes of global warming are not obvious. A debate is under way concerning those causes. In my country, some support the theory that climate change is not caused by human activities, but those people are in the minority. Most experts in the field claim that human economic activities, especially the generation of carbon dioxide, are the factors behind climate change, which has been dramatically described by many speakers over the past two days.

The problems and the efforts to resolve them are intrinsically linked to the contradictions of our world. When the first climate convention was adopted some 12 years ago, the developed countries were believed to be the main perpetrators of excessive carbon dioxide emissions, but much has changed since then. In many respects, we have observed changes for the better. Two of the largest countries on the planet, China and India, have begun to grow dynamically. That growth has clearly led to increased emissions to carbon dioxide, which contribute to climate warming.

How can we solve the problem? The 1997 Kyoto Protocol set out three methods, two of which would contribute most to limiting the carbon dioxide emissions of the highly developed countries, while the third alone promotes, to a certain degree, the mitigation of such emissions by the less developed. The results of the Kyoto Protocol have been significant, but they do not resolve every issue and the Protocol has not been ratified by every country. Many powerful States have failed to adopt it, but in any case it will no longer be in effect after 2012.

Thus, the world is facing a new challenge. On the one hand, as the representative of a developed country — though it is not among the most developed — I would stress that we cannot limit the less wealthy countries' right to development. On the other, we must make progress towards resolving the problems under discussion. We must therefore consider the best way to achieve progress.

I agree with those who claim, regardless of the countries they represent, that the problem cannot be resolved exclusively by methods linked to the pursuit of profit and the treatment of all goods as commodities — in other words, by the application of purely economic instruments. The market economy is the most efficient means of achieving economic growth and generating welfare, as attested by the failure of the communist system. However, market rules cannot be the sole principle governing not only the economy, but also social life and international relations. In that regard, as I did last year, I call for a much higher degree of solidarity. Without far-reaching assistance from the highly developed countries to countries that are rapidly developing or hoping to grow faster, there is no possibility of success.

What should such assistance consist of? Well, first of all, the transmission of technologies that contribute to mitigating emissions. Does the world now have regional organizations that would provide for the transfer of resources from country to country on a major scale? Yes, indeed. We have such countries and organizations, for instance, the European Union (EU), which serves as evidence of the existence of such frameworks. Of course, the EU deals with general development and the protection against climate change, but, in this regard, it can serve as an example. It is an example that needs to be globally followed, where applicable. The question is who can be the agent organizing such international solidarity? The experience of the past sixty years shows that there is only one such organization, the one in which we are debating today, the United Nations.

But in order to achieve that objective, the United Nations must be significantly reformed. Poland has consistently advocated such reform. The main idea of the reform consists of the simple adaptation of the structure of the United Nations system to the fundamental changes in the political geography of the globe over the past sixty-two years. This is intrinsically linked to the reform of the Security Council.

In conclusion, I would like to mention some experiences of my country, similar to those of the Czech Republic, represented here today by Mr. Klaus. We recently did away with Communism. Since then, we have achieved economic success and, on the way, we have reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 30 per cent. Therefore, we see that it is, indeed, feasible to do so. Despite apparent obstacles, the problem is not insurmountable.

So, what methods can be applied? On the one hand, certain types of production should be stopped. On the other hand, we can develop forestation of the land. In Poland and in other countries, this approach can generate fantastic results. But, to achieve this, forests must be under general public control. I represent a country that operates on the basis of a market economy, but forests are a public resource.

Some years ago, the problem area we are discussing today was one of the essential but not predominant issues. Today, it is a key subject in debate in the European Union. Today it is also a theme raised by the United Nations. I believe there are reasons behind this. Therefore, this subject matter needs to be pursued further.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Poland for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Lech Kaczyński, President of the Republic of Poland, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

General debate

Address by Mr. Jens Stoltenberg, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway.

Mr. Jens Stoltenberg, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Jens Stoltenberg, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Stoltenberg (Norway): Two days ago, world leaders met here in this Hall and made strong statements on the urgent need to address climate change. We heard the Chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Mr. Pachauri, present compelling evidence on the state of the world climate. He outlined a dire picture of the

future state of the planet if strong and joint action is not taken. We have no time to lose.

It is imperative that we reach a comprehensive post-Kyoto agreement. The new agreement must be firmly anchored in the United Nations, and it must include all major emitting countries and all major sectors. When we meet in Bali in December we should agree on the roadmap for the coming negotiations.

The industrialized countries bear a special responsibility for the current state of our atmosphere. Therefore, they must also take special responsibility for bringing the global emissions of greenhouse gases back to a sustainable level. Our long-term goal should be to avoid temperature increases above two degrees Celsius compared to the pre-industrial level.

Meeting the challenge of climate change is within our reach. However, it requires that our response be strong and coherent. We need to provide the worldwide private sector with strong incentives for cutting emissions. That is why it is essential to put a price on carbon emissions and to expand the carbon market.

Seven years ago, I was one of the 189 heads of State or Government who signed the Millennium Declaration. We undertook a commitment to deliver on the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). However, unless we make an extra effort, we will not fulfil the promises we made to the people of the world. In particular, we are lagging behind in fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on child and maternal health. Every year almost ten million children die before the age of five. Many lives can be saved using inexpensive and effective vaccines.

Norway has contributed to the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI) since its inception in the year 2000. We have already managed to save more than two million lives through this alliance. But we need to move beyond vaccination.

Each year two million babies die before the sun sets on their first day of life. The four million newborns who die in their first month might survive if they were breastfed and had access to antibiotics and health workers. And not only newborns, but their mothers as well. Each year 500,000 women die in connection with childbirth. Simple, affordable measures can save millions.

Today Norway, together with other Governments, agencies and civil society, launched a global campaign to do precisely that: save millions of lives. The campaign's main thrusts are organizing and financing survival; ensuring that health personnel treat more patients and file fewer reports; and changing the financing mechanism so that treating patients becomes a source of income rather than a cost for health systems. Today we are launching an advocacy campaign for women and children to ensure that our message will reach every corner of the world. I am also pleased to announce that we are building a network of global leaders to oversee and ensure that the women and children will indeed be given priority. Today, let me also announce that Norway is pledging $1 billion over 10 years to support the Millennium Development Goals on child and maternal health.

The global campaign that we launched today, builds directly on the recommendations from the High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence, which I had the privilege of chairing together with my colleagues from Pakistan and Mozambique.

We need a strong and efficient United Nations; we need a United Nations that delivers results; we need a United Nations that delivers on the Millennium Development Goals. Addressing these challenges was the mandate of the Panel. The Panel held meetings in many parts of the world and listened to countries, regional groups, citizens groups, voluntary organizations and many individuals. In November last year we presented our report (A/61/583) and recommendations to the Secretary-General. They are an honest attempt to boost the Organization's ability to live up to its potential. At the heart of our report, we recommend establishing "One United Nations" in each country: one leader, one programme, one budget and one office, wherever feasible. Also — equally important for a better functioning United Nations: we need a better focused management system at Headquarters level. The Sustainable Development Board aims at precisely that.

The Panel set out with ambitions driven by a sense of responsibility, knowing that our most important constituency is not the United Nations itself, but those millions of people who do not enjoy the prosperity and freedom that many of us take for granted. Yet those people, whose life situation gave rise to the Millennium Development Goals, who right now wonder how they will make it through the day — it is for the sake of those poor and destitute people that we must have an efficient United Nations, one that is

well governed and well funded and that will remain a global repository of hope.

That is why we are under an obligation to take a fresh look at the way in which we have come to build a fragmented United Nations, one that risks being weakened, marginalized and less relevant. We have worked with the United Nations system to abolish diseases, such as smallpox, and repressive regimes, such as apartheid. And we continue our struggle to abolish poverty, child mortality, torture and inhuman and degrading treatment — and to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Today more and more people are breaking out of poverty. We have never had greater capacities to bridge the gaps between us, but we cannot allow the international community to waste resources or to work towards the Millennium Development Goals in anything but the most effective and rewarding ways. We must focus our work, measure our results and show that development, as organized by the United Nations, pays high rewards.

That is why we need to be open-minded, recognizing that the most radical step we can take is to do nothing. I am pleased to see the progress being made in the eight pilot countries, where the "One United Nations" model is being implemented in practice. I am also pleased to see that these countries have adopted different "One United Nations" processes and models that are tailored to each country's specific situation. This shows that there is no blueprint.

United Nations funds and programmes operating in the field are already responding. Increasingly, we see better coordination and stronger leadership. I commend the United Nations bodies that have adopted the new guiding principles, and I appeal to the others to follow suit.

The Panel's report sets out a way forward. The United Nations has not broken down, but it requires maintenance; therefore, the Panel did not propose revolutionary changes. Rather, we put forward some practical, achievable and effective measures, building on the thrust of decisions already made by Member States. New gender architecture is urgently needed. I urge Member States to demonstrate the required vision and leadership. This will be an important task for this General Assembly.

Norway prides itself on being a friend of the United Nations. We support multilateral solutions to common problems, but a true friend does not refrain from speaking out when change and improvement are required. We believe in international development cooperation; we believe in a strong and efficient United Nations; therefore, we would like to reform the United Nations.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Jens Stoltenberg, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Lawrence Gonzi, Prime Minister of the Republic of Malta

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Malta.

Mr. Lawrence Gonzi, Prime Minister of the Republic of Malta, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Lawrence Gonzi, Prime Minister of the Republic of Malta, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Gonzi (Malta): I would like, first of all, to extend my congratulations to you, Sir, on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-second session. I am convinced that you will guide the General Assembly through its important deliberations and challenges. I assure you of my full support and that of the Maltese delegation.

I also take this opportunity to express the appreciation of the Maltese delegation to the outgoing President of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session, Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, for her untiring work in facilitating a constructive dialogue among all the United Nations Member States.

Once again, the General Assembly is meeting to consider and debate international issues that impact on the heart and soul of the world populations. We are concerned with the life and survival of those that do not have a voice to cry out against the injustices, underdevelopment, human rights violations, gender

discrimination, poverty, child labour and environmental degradation.

Malta applauds the efforts of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon who, since taking up his office, has validly been making a solid contribution towards a more secure world, which is "our shared responsibility".

The challenge of global climate change, particularly of global warming, induces me to make a few remarks about this environmental threat and its serious economic and social impacts which will impede progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. I am very proud of the fact that almost 20 years ago, in 1988, my country, Malta, raised awareness about the grave repercussions of climate change through an initiative which led the General Assembly to declare that "climate change is the common concern of mankind." Eventually, that initiative led to the adoption of the Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol.

I note with satisfaction the remarkable participation in last Monday's high-level event. The Secretary-General was unequivocal in outlining the challenge the world community is facing today. He said:

> "Much has happened since those early days. But the fundamental challenge remains unchanged, and has become even more pressing. Indeed, I am convinced that climate change, and what we do about it, will define us, our era, and ultimately the global legacy we leave for future generations." (*Press release GA/10619*)

The disastrous effects on local populations that weather extremes are having as a result of global warming, such as Hurricane Dean, which, the Assembly will recall, devastated the economies and infrastructure of the island States of Dominica, Saint Lucia, Jamaica, Martinique and Guadeloupe, and other small island States in the Pacific and the Caribbean. All of that requires the United Nations to strengthen its leadership in dealing with natural disasters.

Malta believes that the issue of climate change and its repercussions must be addressed in a more cohesive and concerted manner among all the international institutions and organizations. It is imperative that all actors involved in climate risk reduction take a unified stand on a strategy and action to strengthen the resilience of affected countries in building their ability to face and adapt to the adverse impact of climate change.

Malta also believes that the United Nations should establish a mechanism through the General Assembly which will report on the activities in the field of climate change throughout the past 20 years and propose elements of a possible future global strategy which avoids the current fragmented approach and takes special account of the needs of small island States.

We owe such an effort to present and future generations. Malta looks forward to decisions at the Bali summit next December that we are sure will orient and accelerate action within the United Nations framework to obtain agreement on a comprehensive, effective, fair and urgent global strategy to limit climate change and adapt to its impacts.

In a few weeks' time, Malta together with the international community will be celebrating the fortieth anniversary of the initiative launched also by Malta on the law of the sea, which, 15 years later, saw the adoption of the United Nations Convention, declaring the seabed and its subsoil as the common heritage of mankind. Forty years after the launch of the Maltese initiative and 25 years after the adoption of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, we can safely state that this concept could also be appropriately applied to the global environment, with the knowledge that this priceless possession is owned by all human beings on this planet. The environment is our common area, our common heritage and as such it is our global concern. As States Members of the United Nations, we must work together to ensure that this precious possession is protected and enhanced.

The maintenance of a special focus on furthering dialogue, peace, stability and prosperity in the Mediterranean and the Middle East is one of the primary objectives of Malta's foreign policy. Together with other European Union member States as well as with our Mediterranean neighbours, Malta will continue to join in the calls for creating the necessary conditions for strengthening peace and cooperation in the region. Malta's participation in the Euro-Mediterranean Barcelona Partnership, the Five plus Five Summit, the Mediterranean Forum, the Euro-Med Parliamentary Assembly and the Parliamentary Assembly for the Mediterranean complement Malta's

long-standing vocation and commitment to, and understanding of, the Mediterranean region. Malta is proud to host the headquarters of the newly established Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean which will meet for the first time in my country this November, launching a new dimension of discussions on Mediterranean affairs.

Close to Mediterranean affairs in the order of priorities is the Middle East, with the Palestinian question at its core. Malta intends to continue, as it has done for many decades now, to support efforts to bring lasting peace in the Middle East. We find the economic and social repercussions on the living conditions of the Palestinian people worrisome. We remain concerned about the security of the State of Israel and of the Israeli people. We are troubled by the continuing violence between Israelis and Palestinians, as well as among Palestinians, violence that continues to claim innocent lives on both sides. Malta will persist in working with the United Nations and the concerned parties for a two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian question. Malta supports the decision of Prime Minister Olmert and Palestinian President Abbas to meet regularly in their quest for a durable and long-lasting solution. We also welcome the appointment of former British Prime Minister Tony Blair as the special representative of the Quartet and the initiative of President Bush to convene a major meeting on the issue in November of this year.

A centrepiece of our Organization is the protection of human rights worldwide. The Human Rights Council's first year of existence has witnessed the successful conclusion of its institution-building process. Malta predicts that the universal periodic review will become an effective and a proactive mechanism that not only provides an appraisal of Member States' human rights records but also encourages further achievements.

Malta welcomes the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by the General Assembly (resolution 61/295). Linked to the promotion and protection of human rights is the right to life. It is Malta's belief that the abolition of the death penalty would enhance respect for the protection of the right to life. Malta also commends and welcomes the Secretary-General's decision to appoint a Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide with the "responsibility to protect" and with an expanded mandate to cover cases of mass atrocities.

This year is the tenth anniversary of the Rome Statute which established the International Criminal Court. Malta reiterates its full support and commitment. My country intends to work with the United Nations and the States parties to the Rome Statute, to ensure that the International Criminal Court strengthens its tools in the administration of justice, reconciliation and the promotion of the rule of law and democracy.

Two weeks ago, the international community joined the people of the City of New York to commemorate the sixth anniversary of the terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre. While grieving with those who have lost their loved ones and with all the people of the United States, we reaffirm our commitment with States Members of the United Nations in the fight against terrorism. The completion of negotiations on a United Nations comprehensive convention against international terrorism would complement and strengthen the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the Secretary-General's Counter-Terrorism Committee Implementation Task Force in addressing the threat of terrorism to global peace and security.

Allow me to touch on another subject. The plight of internally displaced persons and those who are seeking a better life elsewhere has continued to be one of the priority issues of the international community. Indeed, Malta has for some time now been witnessing that tragic human migration, caused primarily by internal conflicts, poverty and underdevelopment, and resulting in a large influx of asylum seekers arriving irregularly on our small island State, which, at 1,200 persons per square kilometre, has one of the highest population densities in the world. The impact on us is therefore enormous.

I would like to reiterate the calls made by Malta in this same Assembly last year for a concerted response from the international community, as well as from the United Nations, its institutions and organizations, particularly the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, in addressing the problem appropriately and adequately. The response should be undertaken particularly by combating the criminal organizations that are financially benefiting from illegal immigration while

they put the lives of those same immigrants at risk, and by providing special assistance to those countries which, like Malta, carry a disproportionate burden in addressing the phenomenon.

Malta hopes that the High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development held last year and the follow-up meetings will continue to find support in establishing a comprehensive institutional and holistic response to international migration and solutions that I hope will be based on the values of solidarity, on respect for human dignity, and on the sharing of responsibility.

In a month's time, the United Nations will be hosting the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development with a view to reviewing the six areas of the Monterrey Consensus. The detailed report of the Secretary-General recommends a series of policies for action by United Nations Member States and other stakeholders in advancing and consolidating economic growth, sustainable development, and social progress. As rightly pointed out by the Secretary-General,

> "The Monterrey Consensus embodies a major commitment ... to keeping fully engaged at all levels ... and to continuing to build bridges among development, finance and trade organizations and initiatives" (*A/62/217, para. 127*).

In that context, the roles of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank are crucial. In addition, the conclusion of negotiations on the Doha development agenda would significantly contribute to the sustainable development of developing countries.

In order to ensure that the United Nations is better equipped to accomplish the mission and mandates given to it by its principal organs, the ongoing process of reform has to be accelerated. The World Summit in 2005 agreed on a number of reforms, and especially on the need to restructure the main United Nations bodies, including the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council. Progress has been made, but, I submit, more progress has still to be achieved. Malta is an advocate of a stronger United Nations that is representative of the whole membership, transparent in its role and actions, and accountable, efficient and effective in its management.

It is also in that context that Malta strongly supports efforts to strengthen the system-wide coherence of the United Nations operational development activities. The reform of the United Nations and the proposed establishment of the "One United Nations" country approach are, in Malta's view, two important pillars on which our Organization can appropriately address the new and growing challenges it is facing. Member States must give the United Nations a new face, a stronger meaning and an innovative way of thinking, implementing and acting.

The United Nations, our Organization, must be given the ability to respond, the capacity to effectively coordinate and deliver, and the means to truly reflect the aspirations of its whole membership.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Malta for the statement he has just made.

The Honourable Mr. Lawrence Gonzi, Prime Minister of the Republic of Malta, was escorted from the rostrum.

The meeting rose at 7.15 p.m.